

STRICTURES

ON

THREE LETTERS

RESPECTING

THE DEBATE AT MOUNT PLEASANT,

PUBLISHED

IN THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE IN 1821:

SIGNED

SAMUEL RALSTON.

BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

PITTSBURGH:

EICHBAUM AND JOHNSTON—MARKET STREET.

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STRICTURES.

MANY reports have been in circulation respecting the Debate at Mount Pleasant. Before that Debate took place, much was said concerning the superlative abilities of Mr. Walker. It was asserted that "he was one of the brightest ornaments of the Secession sect." But, alas! such is the caprice of mankind, such the instability of popular opinion; that it is now agreed on all hands, that Mr. W. is even below mediocrity; and, what is still worse, it is reported that he came to the stage of debate "totally unprepared." This is ungrateful and cruel. That those of his own views, and especially of his own sect, should thus reward his zeal and efforts in their cause. Besides, who, on his side of the question, *since* or before that Debate, has done better? Or who *can* do better? For our own part we sympathize with Mr. W. and do not rate his talents, nor his industry so *low*, as either his quondam, or his present friends seem to do. We think it an act of extreme unkindness, on the part of his professed friends, to attribute the refutation of the Pede-baptist arguments to the incapacity or negligence of Mr. W. Is there no man in all the hosts of Pede-baptists of greater capacity and industry than Mr. W.? If there be, let the cause be maintained, and let not Mr. W. bear all the blame, as if the *whole cause* rested on him.

The other Pede-baptist sects console themselves that their party could have done better than the Seceders. Yes, says the Presbyterian, if some of our "Divines" had taken it up—Yes, says the Catholic, if some of our Doctors had taken it up, you would have heard and seen another issue of the controversy. Thanks be to their clemency! Their moderation is known unto all men.

But, be it known unto all men, that Mr. Samuel Ralston, a teacher of Presbyterianism, has undertaken to review, and has actually finished a Review of the aforesaid Debate, comprised in three short letters, published 350 miles from

Mount Pleasant. This Review is to be found safely deposited in the archives of the Presbyterian church, edited in Philadelphia, under the inspection of twelve "Divines;" resembling numerically the twelve apostles, with one small difference, viz. the twelve apostles had all *one and the same title*, but these twelve divines are not equally divines, for seven of them are "*Reverend Doctors of Divinity*," while five of them are only "*Reverend Divines*." Amongst those few to whom I have disclosed the secret of the said Review, a diversity of opinion prevails with regard to the reasons inducing Mr. R. to deposit his Review in Philadelphia. Some think that he was afraid to publish any thing upon the subject, until it should be inspected by seven Doctors of Divinity and five Rev. Gentlemen. Others suppose that it was because the times were hard, and he was afraid to risk a dollar upon the sale of his Review, and by having it published in the magazine he could have it done free of expense. A third class are so uncharitable as to suppose, that Mr. R. wisely calculated that his Review would be in more credit abroad than at home, and especially where the Debate was least known. It is, however, most probable that all the above considerations co-operated on the mind of Mr. R. and induced him to this method.

After considerable trouble I succeeded in obtaining a copy of the said Magazine, and have kept it in circulation to a considerable extent, both among those who agree, and those who disagree with me in opinion. This Review, like many things of the same kind, resembles the rower in his skill; who, while he looks one way, rows another. Mr. R. had his eyes fixed upon the support of the Pedit-baptist cause; but, I am much mistaken, if his Review has not, ultimately, a very different effect. Let us now turn our attention to the Review.

Mr. R. in the conclusion of his third letter, p. 548 of the magazine, says—"It is highly probable that he (to wit, myself) will reply to these letters, and I," says he, "would just conclude by observing, that should I reply to him it will be upon the following conditions only—1st That my arguments are to be met and combatted by the word of God or sound logical reasoning." Reader, bear this condition in mind, and let us take a sample of Mr. R's "arguments" and "sound logical reasoning." It is to be supposed that he who prescribes such a condition to his respondent,

would, doubtless, have exhibited in his Review, a specimen of sound logical reasoning, and a great regard for the word of God. A few quotations from Mr. R's Review will, however, furnish another proof, how much easier it is to prescribe good conditions than to follow them. Page 264. he says, "From a review of this whole system, as a father of a family and with the bible before me, I must say of such Baptists, and of their system, "O! my soul come not thou into their secret, into their assembly mine honor be not united!" This is no apostrophizing—this is sound logic!! "There are Baptists," says he, "who I am persuaded abhor some of his principles as much as I do." Powerful logic. "Divide et impera." "Those Baptists who have embraced the whole of Mr. C's system, degrade the Old Testament dispensation of grace"—"Paul foresaw that in future days such bold and unscriptural assertions would be made for the purpose of supporting a favourite system." Mr. R. this is quite convincing reasoning! "It is no doubt a matter of surprize to you, that he should have the effrontery to contradict Stephen," page 251. Surprising politeness! "This last part of the reply is not only a quibble but a sorry quibble," page 255. "So intent is Mr. C. on degrading Jews and Judaism"—"There must be something rotten, rotten to the very core, in that system, to support which, compels a man to pour contempt upon the church of God," page 255. "No man of common sense would have had the hardihood to bring it forward again, and its re-appearance in Mr. C's book is a proof to what miserable shifts he is reduced to support his system," page 261. "The same *inexcusable ignorance*, or *unblushing sophistry*, is also manifested in his answer," page 262. "I will throw his proofs into the form of a syllogism, that the reader may at one glance, see them just as they are, in all their shameful nakedness"—"There must be something radically unsound in that system that has recourse to such shameful sophistry to support it"—"Mr. C. brings forward the objection with an air of ridicule bordering on rancorous malevolence," page 263.

I think, reader, you must allow that the above condition comes with a very good grace from Mr. R. after giving us such rare specimens of sound logical reasoning, and regard for the Divine word. You must also grant that it is quite equitable, that Mr. R. should have the *exclusive* right of apostrophizing, and of asserting what he pleases, and in

whatever style he pleases : but on condition that he reply to me, I must not do as he has done. It is a good rule that works both ways, and, therefore, on his condition, I would be excusable in passing him by in silence. The preceding extracts are a few specimens taken from the first letter only ; were I to extract all such from his three letters, they would dwindle down to the size of something unworthy of notice, on other accounts. But as Mr. R. is considerably advanced in years, and as old men are apt to claim some peculiar privileges from which they would exempt the young ; we shall have to concede to Mr. R. the right of asserting without proof, of misrepresenting without contradiction, and of apostrophizing without imitation ; then, with these powerful auxiliaries on his side, we must enter the field with pure, sound logic alone. Be it so, allow me the Divine word and the use of sound argument, I ask no more ; Mr. R. may avail himself of all other means, only that I shall occasionally remind him of it.

Having given a few of Mr. R's apostrophes and gratuitous declamations from his first epistle, I proceed to notice a few of his MISREPRESENTATIONS.

Misrepresentation 1st, page 251. Mr. R. says, "Mr. C. for very prudential reasons, as respects his system, has *entirely* overlooked in that catalogue of covenants which he has given us in the appendix to his book, another, and distinct covenant recorded Gen. 15." Now it is *not* so that in my catalogue of covenants in the appendix, I have "*entirely* overlooked" the covenant Gen. 15. See appendix, pages 157, 169. In both pages, I have not *entirely* overlooked Gen. 15. But I have not made it, as Mr. R. would insinuate that it is, a separate and distinct covenant. For it is not *distinct*. Its only promise is, v. 18, "unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, to the great river, the river Euphrates." And this is not distinct from Gen. 17, or from the covenant of circumcision, for this same promise is engrossed in it ; see verse 8. And what *prudential* reasons I could have for overlooking it are known only to Mr. R ; for there is not a promise of a *Messiah* in either the 15th or 17th chapters of Genesis—nor of a blessing that was not *temporal* in its very nature.

Here I may remark, that Mr. R. seems not to understand the difference between temporal and spiritual, for he insists, page 250, that the Jews, having the oracles of God committed to them, was a spiritual, and not a tempo-

ral privilege. Now when the words *temporal* and *spiritual* are used as a contrast with regard to blessings, (which indeed, though a common, is not a proper contrast, for the proper contrast of temporal, is eternal; and of spiritual, is carnal or natural) *temporal* denotes those blessings which do not change the soul of man, nor convey to it any blessing that shall be commensurate with its existence. But *spiritual* denotes that the blessings affect the soul of man permanently: as for instance, the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, pardon of sin, justification and eternal life, are spiritual blessings, and will, for ever, affect the soul of man. But the having of the oracles of God, or the Jews having an exclusive right to the national adoption, the worldly glory, the covenant of circumcision—of the priesthood of Aaron—of the sceptre of Judah; the giving of the law, the service of the *worldly* sanctuary, and the promise of good things to come through them, are not *spiritual*, but *temporal* blessings; for all these blessings belonged alike to all the Jewish nation, equally to them that perished as to them that were saved. Now the covenant of circumcision did not convey to one infant, under it, any spiritual blessing; neither regeneration, justification, pardon of sin, sanctification or eternal life: of this the whole nation is a proof; and *whatsoever circumcision was to one infant, it must have been, by virtue of the covenant, the same to all*. It was the same to Ahaz as to Isaac. In a word, there is nothing that is merely external, how good soever, that can with propriety be called a spiritual blessing. Thousands have, and do read the oracles of God daily, whose spirits shall not enter into life; whose spirits receive no real, no permanent blessing, consequently, no spiritual blessing from them. We again repeat that the blessings of the covenant of circumcision were temporal, every one temporal. When Mr. R. next takes his pen, let him, if he can, *shew any one spiritual blessing communicated by circumcision to all, or to any of the infant seed of Abraham*.

Misrepresentation 2, page 251. Mr. R. affirms that I "deny that there was a visible church in the world until the day of Pentecost." He refers to no page in the Debate, nor could he, for there is not such a declaration in the whole book. Nay, so far is the above from fact, that I again and again speak of a visible church in the world from Moses' time to the day of Pentecost. Page 26, I called

the Jews God's people, and spoke of their visible church state: so also in pages 40, 41, 43, 44, 53, 98, I spoke of the Jewish church, and of their visible church state; and repeatedly contrasted the Jewish church with the Christian church—Yet Mr. R. affirms, that I denied there was a visible church on earth till the day of Pentecost!!

Misrepresentation 3, page 251. "It is, no doubt," says Mr. R. "a matter of surprise to you, and to others who read your Bibles, that he should have the effrontery to contradict Stephen, who told the Jews that Moses was in the church in the wilderness," Acts vii. 28. I must say, that it is a matter of some surprise to me, that an old man, and a preacher too, should not have learned to pay a greater regard to veracity. See Debate, page 40, where I expressly said, "Now I will cheerfully admit the testimony of Stephen in all its force; and I will call the congregation of Israel in the wilderness, a church." Preachers are not more remarkable for veracity than most other men; yet, seldom do we find them so much off their guard as Mr. R. generally is, in his Review.

Misrepresentation 4, page 254. Mr. R. states that, "Mr. C. says the good olive tree was the Jewish nation, but not as a church of God, for this he denies"—Where Mr. R.? In what page?—no where in my book. You dreamed it Mr. R. I no where deny that the Jewish nation was a church of God. The Jews are called "the congregation of the Lord"—"his people," and why not a church or congregation of God. But Mr. R. there is a great difference in meaning, to those who understand language and holy scripture, betwixt the phrase, *a church of God*, and the phrase, *the church of Jesus Christ*. If Mr. R. will consult Mr. Murray's English Grammar on the English articles, perhaps, he will learn that it is, "no quibble, no frivolous distinction" to say that there is a difference between the phrase, *the son of the king*, and the phrase, *a son of the king*, or *a son of a king*. There is a vast doctrinal difference, as well as a plain grammatical difference, betwixt asserting that the Jews were a church or congregation of the Lord, and saying that they were *the church of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The former I assert, the latter I deny. If we should lay no stress whatever upon the articles, the difference of meaning, by the addition of one suitable epithet, necessary to express the scripture doctrine upon this topic, would be immense. The Jews were the typical

congregation or church of God, but Christians are the *real* congregation or church of God. On this subject, as well as on every other of which the New Testament treats, we prefer to use those distinguishing names which the spirit of God has adopted, in preference to those which men have recommended. The New Testament calls the Jewish state, "the commonwealth of Israel," and when all Israel was assembled in the wilderness they were called by Stephen the church or assembly in the wilderness; but the Christian community is called "the church of God—purchased with his blood"—or the church of Christ called by his grace, and sanctified by his spirit.

Misrepresentation 5, page 256. Mr. R. declares that, "Mr. C. says the church of Christ is built upon the apostles alone." Where? In what page do I say that the church is built upon the apostles alone. This is another of Mr. R's dreams.

Misrepresentation 6, page 261. Mr. R. writes, "Mr. C. has another argument against Infant Baptism which he pronounces in page 30, and elsewhere, to be unanswerable, and as settling the point at once. It amounts to this: The scripture direction respecting Baptism is, believe and be baptized, but infants are incapable of believing therefore they are not to be baptized." Now, Mr. R. why did you not quote my words? but you could not, for there is no such thing pronounced in the 30th page—no, nor in any other page, as you have stated it. The argument above stated is a good one, though in its attendant circumstances misrepresented by Mr. R. But Mr. R. wished to bring it forward in this form, in order to shew his ingenuity in proving infant damnation from it. His words are, "a syllogism constructed on this plan will prove that all infants shall be damned. For instance the scriptures tell us that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; but infants are not capable of believing, therefore they shall be damned. It may answer every purpose," continues Mr. R. "at present, just to observe that when the scriptures say he that believeth not shall be damned, and where they speak of faith as prerequisite to Baptism, they speak of adults only;" and where Mr. R. do they speak of infants only? But let Mr. R. finish his remark—"and to include infants in such passages" (as speak of adults) "betrays unpardonable ignorance in any man." We believe so Mr. R. But now let me ask you, who includes

infants in either?—*We do not.* We believe that such passages respect only those capable from age, of believing; consequently, we oppose Infant Baptism. To use Mr. R's own words, we say "when the scriptures speak of faith as prerequisite to Baptism they speak of adults only," or of those capable of believing. But Baptism is no where enjoined upon any without faith or believing or repenting—therefore, it is no where enjoined upon infants. So that, in fact, Mr. R. states the premises, the legitimate conclusions thence resulting, entirely defeat his own system. The scriptures, moreover, say *something* of infant salvation, but they say *nothing* of Infant Baptism. So that Mr. R's theory is out at another corner.

Misrepresentation 7, page 259. Mr. R. represents me as, "the man who tells us that on the subject of Baptism *He defies all Christendom*"—This is another glaring falsehood—see Debate, page 114, where I say, that I challenge all Christendom to disprove *one fact* concerning the origin of Infant Baptism, and that, a historic fact too. I ask the reader, partial or impartial, is there not an essential difference betwixt saying, that I challenge all Christendom to disprove a certain fact, and that upon a whole subject I defy all Christendom. Suppose Mr. R. had challenged all Christendom to disprove that the Greek word *anthropos* signifies *man*, and that I had represented him "as the man who tells us, that on the subject, of the Greek tongue *he defies all Christendom.*" I must be supposed to be either a fool, or a person destitute of veracity.

Misrepresentation 8. In my quotations from Ecclesiastical history to show the nakedness of infant sprinkling, I mentioned the wild and fanciful notions of those fathers who were eminent in those periods when Infant Baptism originated. Mr. R. admits of their fanciful theories, but misrepresents my design. Hear himself, page 263. "But what if those fathers," says he, "held some errors and fanciful theories. Does it follow that they are not competent and credible witnesses of facts, that happened in their day?" Now, what is the language of this, but that I had represented them as *incompetent and incredible witnesses of facts.* That this is a gross misrepresentation will appear by turning over to page 110, which saith, "the most orthodox of the fathers were full of wild notions and extravagant fancies that would dishonor the lowest grade of Christians amongst us. Many of them were no doubt good men and

faithful witnesses of facts; but they held many puerile opinions."—What shall be done unto thee, O thou false pen.

The preceding instances of misrepresentation are but a few, selected from Mr. R's first letter. Were I, formally, to notice all the misrepresentations in the three letters, it would swell my strictures far beyond their intended limits. These will suffice to put the reader of the letters on his guard, and they must convince the impartial, how little confidence can be reposed in Mr. R. as a reviewer. I presume not to say, whether Mr. R. intended or did not intend to misrepresent and mistake my views. I leave this to his own conscience, and to the Judge of all to decide. But he must have done it intentionally or unintentionally. On either hypothesis he is unworthy of credit as a reviewer. For if intentionally, he is unsound at the seat of all moral and Christian life; and if unintentionally, his mental faculties are not capable of discerning the meaning of plain English, much less of assuming the office of a reviewer.

I proceed next to notice a few of Mr. R's wild and fanciful assertions. By assertions here, I mean propositions stated without either proof, or an attempt to prove them, and such as I have not ranked under the preceding heads.

Assertion 1st, page 250. Speaking of the covenant of circumcision Mr. R. asks, "What was that covenant or dispensation? I answer," says he, "it may be called an ecclesiastical covenant, or a covenant whereby Jehovah was pleased to bind himself by the seal of circumcision to send a Redeemer into the world, of the family of Abraham."—This is Mr. R's capital assertion, for on it, he predicates all his theory. He censures Mr. Walker for viewing the covenant of circumcision, as the covenant of grace; and as he saw that Infant Baptism could not be maintained on that hypothesis, he takes *new ground*, and with all firmness declares Mr. W. was mistaken. Mr. R. has made a notable discovery, viz. that it was not the covenant of grace, but an "*ecclesiastical covenant*." The reader may, perhaps, be curious to know on what grounds, or by what authority, the name which the Holy Spirit gave to this transaction is set aside, and a new name imposed on it. If he will turn over to the above page of the Presbyterian Magazine he will find, that the "*Rev. Samuel Ralston*, in the 19th century, has discovered that the covenant made with Abraham, Gen. 17th, called by the Spirit of God the

covenant of circumcision, was in fact an ecclesiastical covenant. Yes, indeed, a church covenant, or a covenant on which the church of Christ is established. If he should hesitate, on receiving this modern discovery of that which was hid, not only from patriarchs and prophets, but also from all the apostles of Christ; let him remember that he rejects the authority of the Rev. Samuel Ralston. And as Mr. R. cited no other authority than his own genius, it is to be fairly presumed, he deemed his own "*I say so,*" quite sufficient. If there was any possibility of confounding Mr. R. methinks we have a rare opportunity now. But it is a hopeless attempt, to endeavor to confound a writer that could command such astonishing talents of misrepresentation, as his first letter exhibits him to be possessed of; and who considers apostrophes, and assertions, as paramount to sound logical reasoning and the word of God. But as David slew Goliath with a stone, we are encouraged to make an attempt contrary to all appearance of probability. We shall therefore venture to ask Mr. R. a question or two on his capital assertion, viz. *That the Covenant of Circumcision was an ecclesiastical covenant.* Quest. 1st. Pray, Mr. R. show could a covenant that promised nations and kings, and not churches, be called a covenant of churches, or an ecclesiastical covenant.—This question you may conveniently answer by saying that it was *national churches* and kings as the heads of them which were promised; and that the national church of Scotland, which is the mother of your own church, is one of those churches, which grew out of this ecclesiastical covenant. But should you adopt this as an answer to the question, I will then request you to do a greater work than the sons of men have yet done; viz. to prove, that a national church is a church of Christ. This is what Samson, who slew the Philistines, and caught the foxes, could not do. Quest. 2d. How could the most High be said "*to bind himself*" by the seal of circumcision, to send a Redeemer of the seed of Abraham into the world, when such a thing is not once mentioned, nor even hinted at, in the whole of that transaction; nor, indeed, is such a thing covenanted, by the seal of circumcision, in the whole Bible?

Unless Mr. R. can satisfactorily remove those difficulties to his fanciful theory, his system deserves no more credit from a Christian, than the reveries of Pythagoras. Such being the basis of Mr. R's theory of Infant Baptism,

it is not strange, that in raising the superstructure, he should soar so high in the regions of fancy, and so often descend to *ipse dixit*, and, *I say so*, as the highest proof of which his theory is capable. We request the reader to bear in mind, that Mr. R's theory of Infant Baptism rests upon this capital assertion, without the shadow of proof.

Mr. R's second grand assertion is taken from Peter Edwards, p. 251—"Infants were introduced into the Jewish church by circumcision." This Mr. R. says is a part of "a plain and simple logical process by which P. Edwards proved the right of infants to admission into the Christian church."—"That infants were introduced into the Jewish church by circumcision," comes sanctioned by the conjoint authority of Messrs. Edwards and Ralston. But whence is the scripture proof? Besides, if infants were introduced into the Jewish church by circumcision, then it follows, that as females once being infants as well as males, and not having been subjects of Mr. R's initiatory rite, were never members of the Jewish church. If circumcision was the door by which infants entered into the Jewish church, it is evident women were not members of it. It is true we may get rid of this difficulty by a recent discovery of a brother teacher of Mr. R's in the state of Ohio, who proved to a demonstration that females were circumcised as well as males. But Mr. R. by what initiatory rite were infants brought into the church from Adam to Abraham's time?—Surely not by circumcision. How then? "*By sacrifice.*" Yes by sacrifice. If not by sacrifice, according to Mr. R. they were not introduced at all; his words are, when speaking of the patriarchal age—"sacrifice the only mode of initiation," page 253. This plain and logical process, to prove infant membership, has two great chasms in it—1st, no infants in the church for 2400 years—2d, no females in the Jewish church, if circumcision were the initiatory rite.

Assertion 3d. Mr. R. next asserts that in Abraham's time, "the privileges of the church were also enlarged by the appointment of circumcision as a mode of initiation for the males; infinite wisdom seeing that the ancient mode of sacrifice answered all the purposes to the females—females as well as males being permitted to eat of the sacrifices." Glorious enlargement of privilege, a new mode of getting into the church by the painful rite of circumcision!! When a man ventures into the mists of conjecture, we require a winged horse to follow him; sacra-

fice now becomes an initiatory rite, and is quite sufficient for females, but insufficient for the males!!!

Mr. R. in the two subsequent pages, is so much in the indicative mood, so full of the spirit of asserting, that to quote all of his assertions would be to transcribe both these pages. He becomes very eloquent on the following quotation from some page of the Debate, viz. "Judaism and Gentileism are both distinct from and essentially opposite to Christianity." These words are to be found somewhere in the Debate, and although with Mr. R. they are almost blasphemy, we are bold to support them. That the religion once instituted by the Creator amongst the Jews was excellent of its kind, and wisely adapted for the accomplishing of the object for which it was introduced, we presume not to deny; but as it was only instituted "*till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made;*" when that seed came "*it vanished away.*" And, even before it vanished away, it was so mixed with Pharisaism and Sadduceeism, so corrupted with the traditions of the Elders, as some sects of professed Christians are now, that that form of religion was worse than mere Gentileism; for when they had gained a proselyte from among the Gentiles, they made him more the child of hell than he was before. By Judaism, in this sense, we mean that form of religion which was believed in, and practised by the Jews, in the days of the Messiah—of which his betrayers and murderers were—of which Saul of Tarsus the persecutor was, and of which, when the instituted rites were vacated and abolished as no longer obligatory, the apostle Paul so speaks as to justify my words above cited. He calls it "*the ministration of death and condemnation*"—"weak and beggarly elements"—"*carnal commandments imposed upon them till the time of reformation*"—"a yoke of bondage"—and at best it was but "the shadow of good things to come" and "*made nothing perfect.*" And so repugnant to Christianity was circumcision, yes, *that* circumcision, of which Pedo-baptists make so frequent mention, and on which Mr. R. and his brethren lay so much stress, that Paul declared solemnly in the following words, Gal. v. 2. "Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, *if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.*" This is surely equivalent to what I have said, viz. that Judaism is distinct from and essentially opposite to Christianity." This we know is an unpleasant truth to Mr. R. who would

have Baptism to come in the room of circumcision—yes, in the room of circumcision!!—of that circumcision which Paul declared would, to those that were subject to it, since Christ came, *make Christ of no effect*. This same Paul declares, that “whosoever is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law.” Now Mr. R. you must admit that if Baptism came in the room of circumcision, it must fill the room of it; and of course all that are baptized now, in infancy, in room of circumcision, are debtors to do the whole law. We believe Mr. R. there is but one way you can surmount this difficulty to your system, and that is, by mounting your Pegasus and flying off into the eccentricities of the orbit of fancy. And this is quite easy for him, who can tell us that Baptism came in the room of circumcision, and that it did not come in the room of it; that Baptism was prefigured by circumcision, and that circumcision was a type, and again, that it was not a type of Baptism!!

But to resume the subject of the *essential* difference of Judaism from Christianity; this subject so fatal to Presbyterianism. I would adduce one fact in support of the *essential difference*, a fact imperatively calling for consideration, viz. That the Jew as well as the Gentile must be the subject of conversion, before he could be admitted into the Christian church. *His circumcision was of no consequence to admission into the church.* Gentile and Jew were equally concluded in unbelief, with relation to the Gospel, Rom. xi. 32—Paul preached to Jew and Gentile the self same doctrine of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Without professed repentance and conversion, *not one* of the seed of Abraham, under the covenant of circumcision, was admitted into the Christian church. Had a Jew come to Paul saying, “mine are the covenants of promise, the adoption, the giving of the law, the worship and service of God, the sanctuary; mine is circumcision, therefore, Paul, you must baptize me;” what would Paul have said?—What did he always say? “*repent and be converted,*” for, “except a man be *born of water and of the Spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”—“*believe and be baptized.*”

We challenge Mr. R. to produce one instance of a Jew being admitted into the Christian church, from its first exhibition on the day of Pentecost, without professing repentance or conversion. If Mr. R. cannot do this, as we are sure he cannot, what avail a hundred volumes of

theories, and conjectures, and assertions and romance; upon the similarities, and congruities, and expediences of covenants, and states, and dispensations, and privileges. If it required a Jew, as well versed in Judaism as Nicodemus, to be born again, before he could even *see* or understand the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and if it required *no more* of Dionysius the Areopagite, I am at a loss to perceive the difference of being born under, and of not being born under, the covenant of circumcision, with regard to admission into the Christian church, or to the apprehension of its doctrines. I will be yet more "blasphemous" in the apprehension of Mr. R. and some others, and say that Judaism in the mode of its existence, in the apostolic age, was, in its effects and practical bearings, more averse from Christianity than sheer Gentileism; and, that publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven, before the most accomplished Jews. Again, the character of the Jews, insatuated with religious pride, and blended zeal, as depicted by a converted Jew, exhibits, in awful colors, to what extent of crime a people may be led, under false notions of hereditary privileges, mistaken covenanted blessings, and sectarian zeal; his words are—"The Jews both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, (Christians) and they please not God, and are contrary to all men." Such were the circumcised ones; those who had *lawfully* obtained the seal of circumcision; and such was the whole nation, with the exception of a very small remnant, that were *regenerated* and brought into the Christian church. Let Mr. R. and every other Pedit-baptist blush, when they plead for the admission of infants into the Christian church, upon the footing of the covenant of circumcision, when they cannot produce *one solitary instance* of one of Adam's race admitted into the Christian church, upon such a footing, in all the oracles of God.

4th grand assertion—Mr. R. fearlessly asserts, that the promise referred to, Acts 2, "cannot refer to the prophecy of Joel," page 237. What then? It must refer to the 17th of Gen! The absurdity of Mr. R's comment on this promise, is such, that we really think it is descending to vain trifles to notice it. Yet for the sake of another experiment in the department of the human mind, I will, with a reference to his comment, propose a few questions to Mr. R. or any other person who pleases to answer them.

Query 1. With what *propriety* could Mr. R. say that the whole promise of Joel's prophecy was fulfilled in the *miraculous gift of tongues*, conferred on the apostles—when, no such miraculous gift of tongues is mentioned in the promise?

Query 2. With what *truth* can Mr. R. say, in the same page, that "Peter urged this promise as an argument why the Jews and *their children* should be baptized"—when Peter never says one word, directly nor indirectly, concerning the Baptism of their children?

Query 3. Why should Mr. R. endeavor to prove that although Peter cited Joel 2, he meant Gen. xvii. 7?

Query 4. Why does Mr. R. represent the promise of the Holy Spirit as exclusively referring to extraordinary operations, whereas the promise of the spirit, as a spirit of illumination, of wisdom, of prophecy, of comfort, is that promise which distinguishes the ministration of the spirit from the ministration of condemnation, in a degree, and to an extent unknown to the Jews and patriarchs: more especially as Peter applies the promise in Joel to the promise which Jesus gave to his disciples, concerning the communication of his spirit, as a convincer, and a comforter, after his ascension into heaven.—"Therefore," says he, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

Query 5. Why does Mr. R. say, that the Baptists teach, "be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins—for the promise is to you, but not to your children"—when there is not one of them so ignorant of scripture, at least, I have never met with a Baptist so ignorant, as to say, that this promise meant Baptism; for Baptism is a *command*, not a promise. They profess to believe that the promise of the spirit is to them and to their children, even to *as many* as the Lord shall call, but to *no more than the Lord shall call*.

Query 6th. Why does Mr. R. say that I explained the words "*afar off*," as relating to the remnant of the Jews only; when my words which he misrepresents are, page 55, "For" saith Peter, "the promise is unto you and your children"—"all flesh"—"your sons and your daughters," or, "your children." Joel says, 32d verse, "*and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call*"—Peter says, "to them *afar off*"—"even as many as the Lord shall call;" whether Jews or Gentiles?

We shall notice another assertion, page 260. "Now what is called the covenant of God in Christ is the same with what is called the covenant of circumcision, is evident from the consideration that the provisions and object of both are the same." This is one assertion founded upon another, and made with a reference to overthrowing the plain difference asserted in my Debate with Mr. Walker, between the "covenant confirmed of God in Christ," and the "covenant of circumcision"—a difference which Mr. R. in vain attempts to set aside, by the weight of his own authority. I have already shewn that these are *two*, not one, of different names, of different objects, of different provisions, and of different dates. To repeat all that has been said upon this subject, at this time, is unnecessary, as all Mr. R. has done, is to assert, that "two covenants" signify *one*; that it was called "the covenant confirmed of God in Christ, because it had respect to Christ and his church, and it is called the covenant of circumcision because it was confirmed by that rite, thirty years after it was made." Astonishing!! Is this the critic Mr. Ralston? Paul affirms, "it was confirmed 430 years before the law"—thirty years before the covenant of circumcision; and behold Mr. R. asserts that it was only *made* 430 years before the law, and *confirmed* only 400 years before the law or thirty years after it was made!! But Mr. R. we have reason to believe, felt the sophistry of his remarks on this occasion, and therefore provided a retreat for himself in case of the "chronological discovery," as he calls it, being founded in fact; and this he does by saying if it had been founded in fact; "it could not have affected my view of the subject," says he, "as I do not consider that covenant to be the covenant of grace." It might defeat Mr. Walker, but Mr. Ralston is more ingenious and of a livelier imagination!!

Pray, Mr. Ralston, what is the difference betwixt saying that the covenant of circumcision "is the covenant confirmed of God in relation to Christ and his church," and affirming, that it is the covenant of grace?—Your answer, sir, is humbly looked for. I presume your *new* ground is not better than Mr. W's *old* ground; nay, that it is the *same* ground of conjecture and uncertainty.

Having given a few specimens of Mr. R's assertions taken from his first letter, I will bring my remarks upon it to a close, as I have already paid quite too much attention to

it. When he had varied his style with bold invectives, gross misrepresentations, gratuitous apostrophes, and fanciful assertions, in support of his views, drawing to a close he entertains us with presumptions. Page 262, "It is true," says he, "that the argument for Infant Baptism deduced from the Baptism of those households is only *presumptive*, but it is a *presumption* of a very strong kind." Now Mr. R. we have already shewn, that there is no *presuming* that there was an infant in one of those households; except there be some whose imagination is so vigorous as to enable them to *presume* improbabilities and impossibilities. And, we now say, that he is a *presumptuous* man, who *presumes* to found a positive ordinance upon *presumptions*, though of a very strong kind. But Mr. R. is *venturesome*, and *ventures* into deep waters: hear him in his adventurous flight. In page 263, he says, "may we not *venture* to say, that Baptism was also appointed as a means of regeneration, for the infants of his people dying in infancy, and whom he disigned to save!" Was there ever a son of "the holy mother church" a bolder presumer, or more venturesome than Mr. R? Is Mr. R. a Presbyterian!!!—When he has *ventured* so far he may *venture* a little farther and presume that, the infants of Baptists dying without sprinkling cannot be saved! But, indeed, Mr. R. presumes upon a greater degree of credulity in his people, and readers, than I dare presume to exist in my readers. He says, "It might be enough to silence such objectors by *saying* it is of Divine appointment." Now we address mankind, entreating them not to take our *saying* a thing is so, for proof that it is so. Hence we lay ourselves under the necessity of *proving* a thing to be so, and cannot get off by *saying* it is of Divine appointment.

But I was about to conclude without noticing the grand climax of Mr. R's first letter, to which he was advancing from his first line; it is at the close of it. It is in the following words—"And now," says he, "what is the comparative practical operation and effect of the two systems? The Baptists take into the church baptized adults only, and none others are considered under her direction and control; and hence the comparatively slow progress of Christianity in the East under their missionaries, zealous and indefatigable as they are. While upon the Pedo-baptist plan, sanctioned by the examples of the apostles, of taking under her wings, those households, the heads of

whom (which) profess the Christian faith by being baptized; the inhabitants of Otaheite, of Eimeo, and of other adjacent islands in the Pacific ocean, may be said, to be born in a day, according to prophecy." Lest the humble reader should be astonished with such a brilliant effulgence of ingenuity, I shall pause for a moment in the midst of his climax, and allow the reader to recover, while I tell Mr. R. that were he to compare the practical operation and effect of his system with that of the Catholics, and take missionary exertions and success as evidence of their comparative excellence; his, we presume, would fall far in the rear. The Romish party having some years since sent missionaries into New Spain and the South American colonies, to extend her dominions in the new world; and the missionaries not succeeding according to their desires in converting the natives, by the slow process of teaching them their religion, invented a process more likely to make more numerous converts, and to secure their fame, in the good work of Christianizing the world. Their grand and successful expedient was, to make a large quantity of "*holy water*," and when they had driven whole flocks of the natives into one place they sprinkled them in the mass, with holy water, in the name of the Trinity, and thus nations were Christianized. So that they could find a way of applying the prophecy to themselves, as well as Mr. R. which speaks of nations born in a day. Yea, "the holy mother church" far outdoes Mr. R's account of the Presbyterian missionaries. She boasts of one missionary worth all the Presbyterian missionaries of this age. Hear one of her sons, "St. Xavier alone preached the faith in fifty-two kingdoms or independent states, and baptized a *million of converts with his own hands* in India and "Japan." D. Milner, page 241, century 16, "End of religious controversy." Were a Romanist to enter the list with Mr. R. on the practical effects of their respective systems, I presume Mr. R. would be obliged to succumb. To say the least of the combatants we would say,

"Arcades ambo
Et cantare pares, et respondere parati."

But to proceed with the climax. "The Baptists," continues he, "leave their children in the visible kingdom of darkness, where there is no promise nor provision for their regeneration, and if a sovereign God regenerates them, well and good. But Pedit-baptists consider it their duty and

privilege [not to leave their children to the mercy of a sovereign God, but] to plant their children by Baptism in the vineyard of the Lord; hoping that in his own time, and according to his own promise, he will pour out his spirit upon their seed.

This defies all criticism. The children of the Baptists are left to the mercy of God alone, or if the Lord regenerates them in a sovereign way, well and good: but Pedo-baptists don't expect their children to be regenerated in a sovereign way; they want to make sure work of it by Baptism!!! Again, I ask, is Mr. R. a Calvinist, a Presbyterian, or an Arminian? Reader, bear in mind, that there is no promise for regenerating or saving any infants out of the church—if any are saved out of the church, it is *without* promise, in a sovereign way; but the church is designed for a receptacle for the unregenerate, and there is a promise for their regeneration in it!!! So true it is that one error depends upon another, and that superstition debases the intellect of man.

As Mr. R. has brought us to the families and firesides of professed Christians, and as he has brought me to the degrees of comparison, I will take another view of the comparative practical operation and effect of the two systems. I will speak that which I have seen and declare that which I do know. I will use two *proper* names descriptive of two classes of professors. The narrative will explain itself.

There is now living in this western country, James Orthodox, a good Presbyterian, who is the father of eight children, four sons and four daughters. When his first child was born, he had some difficulties relative to its Baptism, not, however, doubting whether it was a proper subject, nor whether sprinkling was the proper mode. On these topics he had no doubt. From his childhood he had learned, "that the priest's lips should keep knowledge," and consequently revered the clergy as God's ambassadors. On these topics, therefore, he never doubted, never called them in question. His father did so before him, and the Confession of Faith taught him his duty. But his chief difficulty was, how he could perform the vows which he must take upon him at the Baptism of his child, for he was very conscientious. His wife, whose maiden name was Mary Pliable, and he, often talked the matter over. Almost every little conversation they had, ended with these words: "It is better not to vow than to vow

and not pay." James was very sincere, and very bashful; and, to tell the truth, he was very backward about keeping up "*family religion*." This was the pinching vow. The little infant in the mean time, was getting up in months, so that it could say "papa and mamma." Finally, one Sabbath morning, Mary said, well James, I think we ought to have the baby *named*, either give it a name one way or another, besides," added she, "it is a shame to see us take so large a baby to meeting, not yet baptized. What will the people think, what will the parson say!" "Indeed," replied James, "it is a shame, I'll have it baptized this day, and I hope the Lord will enable us to perform our vows." Accordingly, that same day, the child was baptized; and that very evening for the first time, James performed "*family worship*." And until this day James, while at home, never once neglected "morning and evening duty." When absent, Mary fulfilled her vows, as well as she could. His other children, at an earlier period than the eldest, were baptized. When able to read they were taught the catechisms, and finally became adepts in them. They were examined every Sabbath evening on the catechism, and sometimes on the sermon which they had heard. Things went on in this way until they came to adult years; and after attending on many public examinations on "the questions," they were pressed hard to fulfil their baptismal vows by going forward with the saints to the "*holy sacrament*." Three of the girls, and one of the boys, as they came forward to the years of maturity, were prevailed on to become "communicants," partly from a sense of present duty, and partly from a conviction of the obligations they were under to be for the Lord, from their vows in Baptism. They decently attend upon their appointed fasts and days of devotion, and are good sound Calvinists. The other four, though of adult years, make no profession, but sometimes go to meeting; and, withal, are a little frolicksome. Such are the outlines of my friend James Orthodox's history, and such the success of the discipline pursued.

William Biblicus is, what is commonly called, a Baptist; he, however, objects to that name, in a sectarian point of view, and contends for the name *Christian*, as being the only legitimate name of a disciple of Christ. His wife Sarah was a professed disciple from the age of seventeen, two years before her espousals to William. They have eight

children, five sons and three daughters. William and his wife Sarah, from their entrance upon the marriage state, worshipped God *socially* and also individually. When their children were born they generally had a name ready for them, which they gave them without any ceremony.

As soon as they could read, and even before they could read, William and Sarah were teaching them the scriptures. Thomas, the eldest son, when eleven years old, could repeat off book the Gospel by Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, Solomon's Ecclesiastes, many of the Psalms of David, and the most lucid parts of the prophecies of Isaiah, concerning the person, advent, character, work and kingdom of the Messiah. When fourteen or fifteen years old, their children had read the scriptures so often, and had committed to memory so much of them, that they were truly walking concordances. Nor did they lose much time, (if loss it might be called) in memorizing the *holy oracles*; for they only committed two verses per day, for six days in the week, and gave in a repetition of them on the first day of the week; thus finishing *twelve* verses per week, which in eight years amounted to 5000 verses, a respectable part of the whole New Testament. William and Mary were *careful* to exhibit in practice the admonitions they gave, and the precepts they taught to their offspring. Nor did they make formalists of them, nor hypocrites, by commanding them to commence a mechanical round of religious forms, so common in this age; never commanding them to make profession of Christianity, either by Baptism or any of the peculiar acts of Christian worship. They contented themselves with giving them the oracles of God, and with causing them to treasure them up in their memories. They left the application of them to their hearts, and their influence upon their practice, as to sacred worship, to the blessing of God; at the same time correcting them from their earliest years for every departure from strict morality in word or deed.

When Thomas was in his fifteenth year, he thus addressed his father: "Father, you have often enjoined upon me the practice of good morals and a correct deportment towards all my relatives and acquaintances, and to imitate your example in my general conduct; but, in relation to the duties of Christian worship, such as prayer, praise, Baptism and the Lord's supper, you have never given me any commands to urge me to the practice of such things: you practise these things, and why should not I?" To

which his father replied, as follows—"Son, I have often, when you repeated those portions of scripture which refer to those parts of Christian worship, called upon you to notice those duties and the promises annexed to them; shewing you that these were peculiar privileges, which the God of all grace had conferred upon all that believe *the record* he has given, and to which all that trust in his son Jesus Christ should diligently attend. You have also seen that I attend on these blessed privileges according to what you have read in this word of life. You know also that I have often said that all who believe the Gospel, should, in the order of grace, or of the sacred record, attend to these practices. Have you yet believed the Gospel?" Thomas replied, saying, "I do believe, and am sure, that I am a sinner as the scriptures declare all men are, and I do know from the Divine word, and the exercises of my own heart, that I am a very great sinner; I also believe, that God, in his *great love* wherewith he loved us *when we were all dead in trespasses and in sins*, did send his *only begotten son*, Jesus Christ, into the world, to seek and save the lost. And, that he revealed the Father to us, and us unto ourselves. I believe that his *obedience unto death*, even the death of the cross, is my *justifying righteousness*, and that *the work he finished on the cross*, independent of any deed, or thought, or desire on the part of man, *perfects for ever* all that believe on him. And, that by his resurrection from the dead, he not only *brought life and immortality to light*, but was declared to be the son of God with *power* to save unto the uttermost all that come by him to God. I rejoice to know, that he commanded *repentance and remission of sins* to be preached, *in his name*, to every creature under heaven, with *assurance*, that *whosoever* believeth on him shall be saved. This term *whosoever*, is so comprehensive as to include me with all my sins, and to *warrant me to look* to him, with *good hope*, for *complete and eternal* salvation. Father, do you call this believing the Gospel?" "Yes," replied his father, "I do; and I hesitate not to say, that he, who *believes in his heart*, what you have *confessed with your lips*, shall most certainly be saved." Thomas again adds, "I have lately been praying, like Saul of Tarsus, and saying, 'Lord what wilt thou have me to do;' and *now* this verse is in my mind all the day—'*arise, why tarriest thou, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.*'" His father, with

much joy, said, "My son, *now* I say unto you be baptized, and continue in the *apostles' doctrine*, in breaking bread, in fellowship, in prayers praising God: and as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so *walk ye in him*."

Thus it came to pass with Thomas, and with some circumstantial differences, with three of his other children, who have come to the years of maturity—the others are yet in their minority. We are happy to say that William Biblicus continues with increasing zeal in bringing up his younger children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We must confess, and with much regret too, that we have known but few families like that of William Biblicus, and too many like that of James Orthodox.

Mr. R. in his second letter, assumes some of the most fanciful and extravagant positions, in support of his favorite rite of infant affusion, that we have ever met with, in any author, upon any subject. Either ashamed, or afraid of the ground taken, by most of his Pedo-baptist friends, he ventures on unexplored tracts and wanders in the labyrinths of his own invention until he is so bewildered as to assail his own brethren, and to wage war with himself. This is, with me, but a small matter, had he not assailed the Light of the world and his infallible apostles. But least that we should prejudge him, let him speak for himself. In the first sentence he says, "I do not consider circumcision and Baptism as primarily designed for the purpose of building up believers in holiness; but as ordinances designed for the conversion of sinners of a certain character." So then, circumcision and Baptism were primarily intended for *converting* ordinances! Where is the proof? *Mr. R. says so.* This may convince such as are credulous, but to him who thinks his faith should not rest upon Mr. R's say so, it appears light as vanity. I fearlessly assert that Mr. R. cannot produce one instance from the whole volume of Inspiration, of one person being converted by either circumcision or Baptism. If then, as Mr. R. says, they were primarily designed for converting ordinances, they appear to have been so badly designed for this purpose, as never once to have accomplished their object. But Mr. R. lays this assumption down as the basis of his second letter, and we must view it as a very important one, and as worthy of minute investigation. Observe then, circumcision was designed to convert Jews and Gentiles of a "*certain character*" only. Mr. R's brief view of the

subject is thus given by himself: "When a Gentile or a Jew, not circumcised, was morally persuaded that Jehovah was the true God; that the ordinances delivered by him to Moses, were the only true means of grace, and mediums of acceptable worship; that it was the command of God, and his duty and privilege, to attend on these means that the might obtain grace; and under this impression attended with diligence on these means for that important purpose, then, he was, by circumcision, to be planted in the church of God and his children with him; and when he or they brought forth the fruit of a living faith, then circumcision was to him or them, as to Abraham of old, a seal of their interest in the righteousness of faith." Thus I have given Mr. R's "brief view" of the *converting* ordinance of circumcision, and of the "*certain character*" whom it converts, in his own words, for the benefit of my readers. This view comprehends some varieties in it, as for instance—an uncircumcised Jew converted by circumcision. Who was this uncircumcised Jew! He that had broken the covenant, and was cut off from the congregation: for the uncircumcised man child, had, according to the covenant, *broken it*, and was necessarily cut off from the congregation. And who was this Gentile of a certain character who was morally convinced that it was the command of God to him, and his duty, to be circumcised to obtain grace!! This uncircumcised Jew, and morally convinced Gentile, using circumcision in order to be converted, never appeared on earth, before Mr. R. gave them a place in his letters, and placed them as two huge pillars, having the whole Pedobaptist system on their shoulders. The weight of the fabric will, I fear, grind them to powder. But his perversion of Rom. iv. 11, is shocking—mark it well. When this qualified Jew and Gentile were planted in the church by circumcision, and their children with them too, of *another* "*certain character*," that is, *not* morally convinced that Jehovah was the true God, when they, some time afterwards, how long, he forgot to tell us, brought forth the fruit of saving faith; then, circumcision became to them, as it was to Abraham, a "seal of the righteousness of the faith which they had *before* they were circumcised:" no, this would have been too glaring; better, then, to pervert the apostle's words into "a seal of their interest in the righteousness of faith," than to expose the deformity of the system. If Mr. R. can convert the phrase, "a seal of the

righteousness of that faith, which he had *before* he was circumcised," into, "a seal of *his interest* in the righteousness of faith;" I say, if the words of the Holy Spirit are thus handled by Mr. R. what wonder, if he has misrepresented and perverted mine! Such is one of the props of Mr. R's tottering system on which he proceeds to build, by what he calls "a *parity* of reasoning," that is, by reasoning as sophistically on Baptism, as he has done on circumcision. Let us hear his *parity* of reasoning. "And," says he, "by parity of reasoning, when a careless or profligate sinner, a heathen, or infidel, under the present dispensation, is morally convinced that he is a lost and perishing sinner; that Jesus is the only saviour of sinners; that, in order to obtain an interest in his atoning blood, and the regenerating influences of his spirit, it is the command of God and his duty and privilege to attend on the means of grace appointed by Christ, and diligently attends upon these means for this purpose; then, that person is to be planted in the church by Baptism, and his minor offspring with him; and when he or they bring forth the fruit of a justifying faith, Baptism is to them a seal also of their interest in the righteousness of faith, and they have, moreover, a right to the ordinance of the supper designed to build up believers in holiness, and to strengthen them in their journey to Immanuel's fair land." This is the whole of Mr. R's brief view of the whole subject. This parity of reasoning, if it were *reasoning*, is no parity at all, even on his own principles. For, on the subject of circumcision, his morally convinced uncircumcised Jew and Gentile were to have *all* their offspring planted by circumcision in the church; but in regard to Baptism it is only the minor offspring that must be planted. Mr. R's parity of reasoning is, then, no parity of reasoning; but if it were, it matters not, it is all predicated on absurdities. It is predicated on at least four gross errors.—The first, that some are morally convinced of the *truths* of Christianity who are unregenerate. The second, that the unregenerate are commanded by God, to make use of certain means to become regenerated, or those destitute of the spirit are to make use of means without the spirit, to obtain the spirit. The third, that unregenerated persons are knowingly, with the consent and approbation of the church, to be received into the church in order to be converted. The fourth, that Baptism is a seal of the righteousness of faith to them some

ten or twenty years after they are baptized, but no seal to them at the time of their Baptism!!! To expose the whole of the error and absurdity in these assumptions would require a volume. Before we make any other remarks upon them we shall give a few more sentences from Mr. R. to shew that these are really his sentiments. In the next page he says, "I consider the church as designed not only for the reception of believers, or regenerated persons, but as *primarily* designed for the regeneration of sinners of a certain character." Happy are the unregenerate of Mr. R's certain character; for he has many good things for the unregenerate of a certain character—But he adds: "through Baptism as the appointed mean." Well spoken, Baptism the appointed mean of regeneration for those in the church!! Baptism the mean too of infant regeneration!!! Romanists, shake hands with the Rev. Samuel Ralston—Now, sober minded reader; if God appoints any means to a certain end, the means are suited to that end; his means are appointed in infinite wisdom and goodness. If then, he has appointed Baptism as a means for regeneration, then *some*, if not *all infants*, which are baptized, shall be regenerated by Baptism. But, of those that live, none appear to be regenerated by Baptism. Therefore Mr. R's only refuge is, *all that are regenerated in Baptism die*. But unfortunately some virtuoso will say, how does Mr. R. know this. Aye, that's the question!

Mr. R's views of the church of Christ drove him into this awful extreme in error. For to the Pedo-baptists whose sentiments he opposes, he says, "there is no way of accounting for this matter, (i. e. viewing the Jewish the same as the Christian church) than by admitting that circumcision was a mean appointed for producing the circumcision of the heart!!"

"The way of transgressors is hard," and Mr. R. is obliged to deny one of the plainest truths in the New Testament to make out his creed. He maintains that true faith was never required in order to Baptism; no, not in one instance—that all that was requisite to fit for Baptism was a "speculative faith," or a faith that cannot save the soul; the faith of the unregenerate!! "Now," says he, "that this faith and feeling entitles adults to admittance into the church by Baptism, I hope to make appear"—Yes, indeed, he makes it appear that when Peter said, *repent and be baptized*, or Philip, *if thou believest with all thine heart*

thou mayest, nothing more was intended than a "speculative faith," the "faith of the unregenerate!!" To spend time in refuting this, would be to abuse reason—to insult the understanding of the most common reader of the scriptures. What! should a person of a distempered mind in some reverie, assert that the name *Jesus Christ* was equivalent to *Mahomet* and denoted the same person, ought we to attempt to disprove it!!

He goes on to prove that, "in all the baptisms recorded in the New Testament, it does not appear that there is *one of them* wherein the profession of a living faith, and of an evangelical repentance, was required of the person to be baptized." Oh no! Mr. R. the head of the church only required the faith of the unregenerate; your speculative faith in order to Baptism. In *no one instance*, living faith was required, consequently, in *every instance*, *dead* faith was required!! This is orthodox, this is Presbyterianism. But, after all, Mr. R. is so complaisant as to *permit* those who have living faith to be baptized.

Mr. R. ridicules the Baptists for not *intentionally* receiving the unregenerate into the church, and once compares their views of a pure church to a tenet of the Anabaptists of Germany, who, he says, amongst other errors, held that of a spotless church. And again he compares them to a foolish husbandman—But let him speak for himself. "How opposite the conduct of the Baptists in planting the church, to that of the husbandman when he is about to plant an orchard or a vineyard. The husbandman looks for young trees or plants of the fruit bearing kind, that have not yet brought forth fruit, and plants, and digs about, and dungs them, that they may bring forth fruit. But should the Baptists happen to find a tree of the fruit bearing kind, bearing fruit in the wilderness, they root it up, and then plant it in the vineyard or church." Let us now explain the parable. Mr. Ralston is the good, wise husbandman; the young plants of the fruit bearing kind, are the little babes, the natural posterity of the unregenerate of a "certain character;" Mr. R's qualified ones, "to *look for these plants*," is to preach to these certain characters their duty to offer up their babes in Baptism, "that have not yet brought forth fruit;" means, that they are little, tender, unregenerated ones, who know not their right hand from their left. Then he plants one; that is, by Baptism, he makes it one of the little ones of his parish. Next, "he

digs about it, that is, he often *visits* the family in which it sprung up. Lastly, "*he dungs it,*" that is, manures it richly with catechisms, creeds, &c. and thus it brings forth the fruit of a true son of the church. The foolish husbandman is the Baptist, who is so deluded, as to think that all these little tender plants, above described, are not *living*, but, in a Christian sense, *dead* branches; "*dead in trespasses and sins;*" he is so stupid, as not to be taught to know, that *dead plants* may be planted, *dugged* about, and *dunged* until they be quickened, or made alive. He is withal so impertinent, as to say, that he understands that Mr. R. has been planting, digging about, and dunging, these little spiritually dead plants, for many years, in the hopes of quickening them; and that not any of them have, by these means, been brought to life.

Mr. R. we have learned, has delivered whole sermons upon the peculiar art of digging about, and dunging dead plants, in order to inspire them with life, and fruitfulness; but he has not been able yet to furnish an instance of his actual success.

But we had almost forgotten one part of the parable. If the poor deluded Baptist happens to find, in the wilderness, a tree of the fruit bearing kind, actually bringing forth fruit, that is, one who gives evidence of believing the Gospel, "*he roots it up;*" that is, he by Baptism renounces the world, is separated from it, added to the church, and all that the humble Baptist expects from this is, the *safety* and *greater fruitfulness* of this tree. Every person knows that a fruit tree enclosed in a garden, and cultivated there, is safer, and more fruitful, than when in the open forest, exposed to every peril. But none except such husbandmen as Mr. R. think of bringing the dead to life by cultivation. In viewing Mr. R's efforts in the second letter "*to bring a clean thing out of an unclean,*" I must exclaim, though it be but exclamation, O prejudice and priestcraft, how have you deprived your subjects of common sense, and common modesty! How have you bewildered and distracted their minds, insomuch, that while they reject the plainest truth, they cordially embrace the most complicated and monstrous absurdities. O for a second Luther to lash the Popery of false Protestants, and to expose the legerdmain of interested priests!!

The grand error of Popery which has, in a greater or less degree, infected the religious sects of Christendom,

forms a very prominent feature in the picture of Christianity, drawn by the pencil of Mr. R. It is an error of the most pernicious tendency to true godliness, and, on which the most popular exhibitions of Christianity are predicated. It is full of deadly poison. The minds of so many professors are so diseased by its deleterious influence, that simply to maintain it will, we are aware, excite their bitterest invectives. It is this—that the forms of religion are to be enjoined upon the unregenerate, in order to their regeneration; or, that all called “gospel hearers” are to assume the forms of godliness, such as prayer, praise, &c. as means of grace or of salvation. So consecrated is this error from the pulpit and the press, by both the Pharisees and the Sadducees of the present day, that to call it an error, will, we apprehend, procure for us the severest censure. This error, too, is of great antiquity. It was taught by all the eastern Magi and Pagan philosophers, with respect to their gods. The sum of their declarations upon this topic was, that *all men* should worship the gods with prayer, praise and sacrifice. It was incorporated with national Christianity by the Pagan philosophers, who put on the profession of Christianity, and was publicly canonized by the first Christian Emperor. In reading the life of Constantine, as depicted by Eusebius Pamphilus, we meet with laws and decrees in almost every page, for the enlargement of churches, and the erecting of new ones; for the conquest of idolatry by an universal establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman empire. Amongst those laws and decrees which done more real injury to the souls of men than all the ten Pagan persecutions, we find the following: Eusebius, page 612, folio edition, chap. 19, book 4, of the life of Constantine—The title of the chapter is, “How Constantine ordered the Heathen soldiers to pray on Sundays.”—It commences thus:

“But to them who had not embraced the faith, he issued out a precept in a second law, that on Sundays they should go out into a *pure field*, (i. e. a field destitute of altars and sepulchres,) in the suburbs, where, after a signal given, they should *all* pour forth a prayer to God which they had learned before. Further, he himself gave *all* his soldiers a *form of prayer* ordering *all* of them to recite these words in Latin:—“Thee we acknowledge to be the only God; thee we declare to be king; thee we invoke as our assistant—’Tis thy gift that we have gotten victories; by thee

we have vanquished our enemies. To thee we pay our thanks for past blessings, and from thee expect more in future. *We are all thy humble supplicants.* Keep our Emperor Constantine, together with his most pious children, in safety amongst us; and continue him a victor during the longest space of time, we humbly beseech thee."

Such was the imperial statute, and such the imperial prayer. Italy, England and Scotland have for fifteen centuries, improved but little upon it. Parrots might thus be taught to say, "we are all thy humble supplicants." It speaks for itself; the *wise* will understand it.

Paul declared that the man of sin, and son of perdition could not be fully manifested, until that which let or prevented, was taken out of the way. This was Pagan Rome, or the Pagan Emperors. That power and hindrance to the advent of the man of sin, was taken away when Constantine was converted from a Pagan Emperor to a "Christian Emperor." The first act of this man of sin was to enlarge his dominions by causing millions to put on the forms of religion who never felt its power, and to open the gates of the church as wide as those of the world. A thousand volumes attest this melancholy fact. The Lord has, for some time, been *consuming* by the spirit or word of his mouth, the works of this man of sin, and he will *totally* destroy him by the brightness of his coming.

Mr. R's views of the Christian church correspond with the spirit of the Emperor's decree. All out of the church he would make "inquiring and praying sinners," and would exclude from the church only "the grossly ignorant and immoral." He admits only the "unregenerate of a certain character." Mr. R's system naturally divides itself into three parts with regard to the manner of its operations. First, to make the unregenerate, "inquiring and praying sinners;" secondly, to admit into the church these unregenerated, inquiring and praying sinners; in the third place, to prepare these inquiring and praying sinners for a seat among the communicants, and then is consummated his system. But a *model* for such proceedings and for such a church, the scriptures do not afford. Whoever read of a church in the scriptures composed of three kinds of members—of baptized or sprinkled infants; of "inquiring and praying unregenerated sinners;" of some three month's and six month's communicants. Such a church is a *figment* of human invention, unsupported, and unsupportable by

scripture, sense, or reason. His church's honor and purity is to be supported by the part of it called "communicants." His own words are, page 347, "As for that portion of the church which consists of communicants, or of those who profess godliness, it is, in my opinion, best calculated to preserve its honor and purity." The communicants then, or those who profess godliness, for two-thirds of Mr. R's church do not profess godliness, are to preserve the honor and purity of the baptized infants, the inquiring and praying unregenerated sinners. Truly their piety ought to excel that of Noah, Daniel and Job united! Marvellous, however, as it may appear, Mr. R. attempts to prove his triformed church to be Christian, by a criticism on *hagios* and *hosios*, taken from Dr. Campbell. Now, we admit that Dr. Campbell was a very good linguist, and that his remarks on *hagios* and *hosios* are correct; but that Dr. Campbell intended to prove, or that Mr. R. has thereby proved, that the primitive church was either *intentionally* or *professedly* composed of grossly ignorant sprinkled infants, inquiring and praying unregenerated sinners, and one-third three month's or six month's communicants, we utterly deny.

Mr. John Walker of Dublin, once a minister of the established church, and Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and, his enemies themselves being judges, confessedly one of the best, if not *the best* linguist in Europe, in his letters to Alexander Knox, Esq. M. R. I. A. has gone much farther on his criticism on *hagios* than Dr. Campbell; and has *unanswerably*, shewn, from the use of *hagios* and its corresponding term in hebrew, viz. *kadosh*, in the sacred dialect. that all believers in Christ are *perfectly* sanctified in him, the moment they believe the Gospel—that there are no degrees in a sanctified state, any more than there are not different degrees in the state of matrimony; consequently that *sanctification* is not a *progressive work*, as the Presbyterian church teaches. He demonstrates that all Christians, by faith, are as perfectly sanctified as justified in Christ; that it is as instantaneous in the one case as in the other; that Christ is equally *made unto them holiness* as *made unto them righteousness*. This is a legitimate conclusion from the true import of *hagios*. That Christians *grow* in grace and increase in living *conformably* to a state of holiness is also demonstrated by Dr. Walker. We presume that this is a conclusion, from the import of *hagios*, very unaccep-

table to Mr. R. and contrary to his *strain* of doctrine. We refer him to the seven letters above mentioned. Mr. R. insists that Paul did not address the Christians composing the churches to whom he wrote as "*real saints*," but only "as persons devoted to, or destined for a sacred purpose." Dr. Owen teaches that the apostles always addressed the churches as *real*, not as *professed saints*, for it would have been a violation of Christian charity to have thought otherwise. Dr. Walker maintains that Paul addressed them as perfectly sanctified *in Christ Jesus*. But these were not acquainted with the meaning of *hagios* as well as Mr. R. ! But laying no stress on Mr. R. Dr. Walker, or Dr. Owen, let us judge for ourselves. I ask, then, in what sense is *hagios* applied to a Christian? The only answer that can be given from the Divine oracles is, that it is applied to him *only as being in Christ*. It is worse than mere trifling, then, to say that being in Christ does not denote a *real saint*. But let us see how this term is used by the apostles—Ephesians i. 4: "As he hath chosen us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be *hagious, real saints*;" not only *devoted* to a certain use, but, *really fit* for it.—1st Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified, *hegiasthete*, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"—Surely this denotes real saints, Col. i. 22, "To present you holy, *hagious*, and unblameable, and unreprouceable, in his sight"—Does not this denote real saints. 1st Pet. i. 16, "Be ye holy, for I am holy"—*hagioi genesethe oti ego hagios eimi*. Does not *hagioi* here denote real saints. It is quite unnecessary to write out all the portions of scripture, in which this word occurs, for in no one place is it applied to Christians, but only in relation to their being in Christ, or being conformably to such a state. Thus Paul addresses the Romans, *kletois hagiois*; the Corinthians, *hegiasmenois en Christo—kletois hagiois*; the Ephesians, *hagiois kai pistois en Christo*; the Philippians, *hagiois en Christo*, &c. I had said, that the apostles addressed the churches as saints, all saints in Christ Jesus, this destroyed Mr. R's triformed church; therefore he attempted to shew that *hagios* does not denote a real saint. I think I have shewn that it does. But he says the members of the primitive churches are not called *hosioi*, or pious, but only *hogioi*, devoted to a sacred use. Now what is the import of this? If not one of the saints in the New Testament is called *hosios*, pious, must we infer that not

one of the saints was pious. This would defeat Mr. R's triformed church, equally with the truth which he opposes, for the one-third of his church must be *so pious* as to preserve the other two-thirds from putrefaction. So that in fact Mr. R's abuse of the terms *hosios* and *hagios* avails to the destruction of his own system, on his own hypothesis, and affects the subject nothing. The term *hosios* occurs but eight times in the New Testament, five times it is applied to Christ, as primarily applicable to him; once, indeed, he is called, Revel. xv. 4, "*monoshosios*"—"Thou only holy one." 1st Tim. ii. 8, it is applied to the hands of saints—lifting up *holy hands*. Titus i. 8, it is applied to the bishop—he *must be holy*, or benign. Once it is translated *mercies*, *ta hosia*, Acts xiii. 34. Approving then of Dr. Campbell's dissertation on *hagios* and *hosios*, and also of Dr. Walker's and Dr. Owen's, I cordially disapprove of Mr. R's abuse of such a criticism, which, in fact, if it proved any thing, would prove that *not one* of the saints addressed by the apostles was *pious* or benign! The apostle, moreover, not only used the term *hagios* to express the real saintship of the churches addressed, but he spoke of their *election*, their *justification*, their *pardon*, their being *accepted* and acceptable in the Beloved. *And never, in one instance, does he address the churches as designedly or intentionally composed of any but real saints, and if any appeared not to be a real saint he was to be put away from amongst them.* This fact excludes Mr. R's triformed church from any place in the oracles of Christ.

Mr. R's third letter is ostensibly devoted to the *action* of Baptism. He runs the common round of Pedo-baptists on the verb *baptizo* and the Greek prepositions connected in construction with it; and its verbals, when used to express the administration of this ordinance. But in the blindness of his zeal, and in the virulence of his aspersions, he has rather outstripped most of the modern, and all of the antient defenders of the rite of infant sprinkling, with the exception of the famous Richard Baxter; especially, in the extravagant conclusions, and self-contradictory assertions, into which his system often leads its warmest supporters. But let us take the *result* of his review on this part of the subject in his own words, page 490, "And now," says he, "what is the result of this part of the review? This, that nothing perfectly decisive respecting the mode of administering Baptism can be legitimately inferred from

the word *baptizo* nor from the prepositions connected with it." Reader, mark this well, read it over again. Mr. R. in thus giving us *the result* of his review, has saved us the trouble of running it over to find it out; and it is enough for our present purpose, in addition to what we have said in our Debate with Mr. W. merely to consider "*the result*" of this learned advocate of infant sprinkling.

The grand ultimatum of his Greek criticism is, that nothing perfectly decisive respecting the mode of administering Baptism can be learned from Greek; from the Greek words used to express the nature of the action of Baptism. The first conclusion from this grand result is, that ye who can read the English New Testament, and not the Greek, are as capable of determining the meaning of Baptism and of the scriptures upon this subject, as the learned Mr. Ralston—The result of whose erudition is, that nothing perfectly decisive can be learned from Greek. The result of all your English, then, can be no worse than of all Mr. R's Greek. Yea, it is incomparably better, for you can perfectly decide that Philip and the Eunuch *went both down into the water*, and, *came up out of the water*; and you can perfectly decide that when Mr. R. sprinkles an infant out of a basin, he and the infant do *not* go down into the water, nor come up out of it. You can perfectly decide that Philip required the Eunuch to profess the faith before he would baptize him, and you can perfectly decide that Mr. R. does not require the speechless infant to profess the faith before he sprinkles it. You can perfectly decide that there is but *one* Baptism, and if but *one*, you can perfectly decide that Mr. R's *baby* sprinkling is not that *one* Baptism. Your English then is evidently better to you, than all Mr. R's Greek is to him. We feel pleased with the result of Mr. R's Greek criticism, though we cannot thank him for it, nor coincide with him in it. For the measure of Greek literature which we possess, whether greater or less than Mr. R's measure, authorises us to decide with perfect certainty that immersion is the *only* Baptism. We rejoice to admit also that the mere English reader can, and myriads of them have, come to perfect certainty upon this ordinance from the English New Testament.

But, again, with regard to Mr. R's learned result; I ask, whence originates the ambiguity? Or how is it, that he cannot decide with certainty?—There are but two reasons

that human ingenuity can assign, why he cannot decide, with certainty, upon the import of the Greek verb and prepositions used by the inspired penmen, to teach the meaning of this ordinance. The one is, the inspired writers made use of ambiguous or equivocal words, which had no decided meaning; or, upon the evidence that this is not the case, the other reason is, that Mr. R. does not understand Greek. I say no other reason can be assigned, why Mr. R. cannot perfectly decide upon the meaning of the words used by the Divine Spirit, to teach us this ordinance, except some ill natured person should say, that prejudice, and a desire that it should be so, have blinded his eyes that he cannot see. Now upon the first supposed reason it would follow, that the apostles did not use great plainness of speech, which is a flat contradiction of their own words; for Paul says, "*We use great plainness of speech.*" And upon the second supposed reason, Mr. R. should not have attempted a subject beyond the reach of his acquirements.

What a blessed ambiguity has Mr. R's criticism thrown upon this subject! What a happy field for controversy! Some men have a rare talent for making plain things dark, and certain things doubtful. Mr. R. seems to have a good share of this talent, and to have a very respectable share of good policy; for when he dare not go so far as to say that baptizo signifies to *sprinkle* a few drops of water upon the face in order to wash the whole body: when he could not produce one instance of its being rendered to *pour* or *sprinkle*, from all authors, sacred or profane; his policy was to make it an *ambiguous* word, of doubtful disputation, and to represent it as neither signifying to immerse nor to sprinkle. He resembles the mother of the *dead* child, who claimed the *living* child as her's, before king Solomon; her words were, "let it be neither mine nor thine, but *divide* it." So says Mr. R. let it neither signify dip nor sprinkle, divide it, make it ambiguous. We will say, "*let it not be divided,*" rather let Mr. R. have it his way than render the Divine record ambiguous.

The Greek language was the most finished language ever spoken on earth; the most copious, the most definite, the most musical. It was happily over-ruled in infinite wisdom and goodness, that it should be the language in which the Gospel or New Testament should be written and handed to the church. With respect to its copious-

ness and precision in regard to the use of water for cleansing, we have to observe, that it had no less than four distinct verbs, with their compounds, in common use. There is *louo* to wash, in general, the summum genus; *nipto* properly to wash the hands; *raino* and *rantizo* to sprinkle or asperse, and *bapto* or *baptizo* to dip, plunge or immerse. Now, as in English, we never use "to dip" to signify the same as "to sprinkle," so never does *raino* in Greek signify *bapto*, nor *bapto* *raino*. Suppose for instance that Mr. R. was indicted for having maliciously dipped A. B. in the river, and that two respectable witnesses were sworn in open court, who testified that Mr. R. only sprinkled a few drops of water in the face of A. B. I ask is there a jury in America that would bring in their verdict condemning Mr. R. for having dipped A. B. Most assuredly there is not one who understands English, that would not acquit him of the charge. I say, then, that were men disinterested, and as well versed in Greek as in English, they would with equal ease and equal certainty decide, that he who was merely rantized was not baptized, or he that was sprinkled was not immersed or baptized.

But Mr. R. has a remark worthy of notice in the same section with his grand result; it is this, "And certainly if a doctrine is to be established by the meaning of the word that conveys it, it must be by the meaning that the inspired penmen attach to it, and not that of heathen writers." This is in fact an acknowledgment that the inspired penmen and heathen writers put different meanings to the same word, and that the word *baptizo* among the heathen writers signifies to immerse, but amongst the sacred penmen it signifies to sprinkle!! This is of a piece with saying, that Baptism *literally* signifies immersion, but figuratively it signifies sprinkling; that circumcision was a shadow or type of Baptism, a shadow of an emblem!! A type of an ordinance!! We had in our Debate with Mr. W. occasion to charge a great proportion of the clergy, of having taken away the key of knowledge from the people. And with how great justice Mr. R. may be ranked amongst such, this last quotation from him clearly shews. I ask all those acquainted with dead languages, how are we to come at the knowledge of the meaning of the words of which a dead language is composed, but by ascertaining the meanings which were attached to them by the people whose mother tongue it was. And how can

we ascertain the ideas attached to any word, but by having recourse to the authors that wrote in that language in the times to which we refer; and who but the people whose language it was, are acknowledged to be masters of it. Suppose a student of the Latin tongue, who had read Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Juvenal, and when about commencing Persius, his preceptor addresses him thus: "Sir, you are now commencing an author who lived almost contemporary with all the great Latin poets, a very fine writer indeed, but you must know that he does not use words in the same sense as the other Latin authors you have read; he has a peculiar way of his own; your dictionary will be of no use to you, for it explains words in the commonly received signification of Latin authors, but by hard study you must make out his meaning from himself. If you fail, I will punish you for your stupidity." The young gentleman replies, "Sir, you are as hard as the Egyptian task-masters, you will not allow me *straw* and you will exact my full tale of brick. How shall I understand this author; give me some key to open the lock, and I will try what I can do; but how can I know what he means, when you tell me that he does not use words in the commonly received sense." The case is parallel, and if this be not to take away the key of knowledge, we know not how such a sin can be committed now. To grant, that in other Greek writers, the term in dispute signifies to immerse, but in the New Testament it signifies to sprinkle!! This is clerical legerdemain with a witness. Schleusner says, "It properly signifies to immerse and dye, to dip into water," as Mr. R. quotes him, "but in the New Testament it is never used in this sense." Against this there is no rising up! What is the authority on which this assertion is made? No authority is adduced but the sovereign will of the gentleman who asserts so. Did he produce an instance in the New Testament where it could not so signify? Does Mr. R. produce such an instance? *Not one.* But I ask Mr. R. how do you acquire "the meaning the inspired penmen attach to it," when the meaning the classic writers attach to the term must be rejected. Do, Mr. R. when you next write, favor us with the secret. Let us have the key of knowledge until we abuse it, and then put it in your pocket again.

But after having heard this great critic Mr. R. declare that the term *baptizo* "cannot determine the mode of ap-

plying water to the subject," let us cite some of the most learned of the Pede-baptists, and hear what they have to say. I will summon their very chiefs.

For the honor of Mr. R. and the brotherhood to which he belongs, we shall begin with Calvin. "The very word *baptizing* signifies to *dip*; and it is certain that the rite of *dipping* was observed of the antient church." So speaks John Calvin, Just. lib. 4. chap. 15. sect. 19. But he did not understand Greek as well as Mr. R.!—Let us next hear Martin Luther; his words are, "*Baptism* is a Greek word and may be translated a *dipping*, when we dip something into water, that it may be covered with water; and though it be for the most part almost altogether abolished, for neither do they *dip* the whole children but only sprinkle them with a *little water*; they ought nevertheless to be *wholly dipped*, and presently drawn out again, for that the etymology of the word seems to require. I would have those that are *to be baptized to be wholly dipped into the water as the word imports, and the mystery doth signify*." Tom. 1, fol. 71, and tom. 2, fol. 19.

Mr. R. laughs at Baptists for talking about express commands, &c. when they cannot produce an express command for dipping. Wonderful man! Is it not an express command which saith, "make disciples out of all nations, *dipping them in the name, &c.*" Math. xxviii. 19. And that this is the true translation all Pede-baptists of eminent learning affirm. Let us next hear Dr. Owen, "For the original and national signification of baptizo, it signifies to dip, to plunge, to dye, to wash, to cleanse—That no *honest* man who understands the Greek tongue can deny the word to signify, *to dip*." Posthumous works, p. 581. But Mr. R. who is a very honest man, would have it to signify to sprinkle.

Dr. Hammond says, "Baptismos signifies an *immersion* or *washing the whole body*." Annot. John xiii. 10.

Bishop Taylor: "If you attend to the proper signification of the word Baptism, it signifies plunging into water, or dipping with washing." Rule of Conscience 3d, c. 4.

Chambers says, "The word Baptism is formed from the Greek baptizo of bapto, I dip or plunge—That in the primitive times this ceremony was performed by immersion, as it is to this day in the oriental churches, according to the *original signification of the word*." Quoted by Junius, p. 81.

Casaubon says, "The manner of baptizing was to plunge

or dip into the water, as even the word baptizo itself plainly enough shews." On Math. iii. 6.

Zanchius: "It signifies properly to plunge, dip—So the antient church used to dip those that were baptized."—Vol. 2, page 217.

Beza on Math. iii. 11, says, "The word baptizo signifies to dye by dipping or washing, and differs from the word *dunai* signifying to drown, or to go down to the bottom as a stone."

Joseph Mede on Titus iii. 2, saith, "There was no such thing as sprinkling or rantism used in Baptism in the apostles' days, nor many ages after them."

Chamier Pan. Cath. tom. 4, l. 5. c. 2, ser 6, "The antient use of Baptism was to dip the whole body into the element which is the force of *tou baptizein*. Therefore did John baptize in a river, which is nevertheless changed into aspersion though uncertain when and from whence that custom was taken."

Volumes of quotations might be written out on the meaning of this word, taken from the concessions of Pedo-baptists themselves, expressly contradictory to Mr. R's assertions on the meaning of this term. I will mention a few of the most eminent and learned Pedo-baptists who affirm contrary to Mr. R. viz. Scapula, Stephens, Grotius, who briefly says, it signifies to dip over head and ears; Pasor, Vossius; Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, cites Bucan, Bullinger, Zanchy Spanhemius, proving it to signify to dip into water; Math. viii. 38. Erasmus, Selden; Daniel Rogers peculiarly express, p. 177, Mincaeus in his dictionary. Piscator, who also adds that "*udata polla*," which, in the common version reads much water, but properly signifies "*many rivers*," as *udor* in the Sing. Num. signifies the river Jordan." See also the statements of Maastricht, p. 917; Burkitt on Rom. vi. 4; Dr. Manton on Rom. vi. 4, and Dr. Campbell's Critical Notes. In addition to those names mentioned, as conceding the meaning of the term, and the practice of the primitive church to have been as the Baptists believe and practice, I will add a few names of learned and distinguished Pedo-baptists who renounced the system of Pedo-baptism, and gave up good livings and much worldly honor from conviction of their errors on this subject, and others connected with it; and consequently became Baptists as far as the word denotes the faith and practice of Baptism as taught in the scriptures. The testimony

ny of those who practice what they teach is most worthy of respect; such were Mr. Smith and Mr. Tombes of Oxford college, Eng. Henry Denne, Henry Jeffrey, William Dell, Sir Thomas Fairfax, Mr. Hanseed, and Francis Cornwell, all of Cambridge college, and some of them distinguished authors. The last mentioned, who was of the established church of England, when he was searching the scriptures upon this topic, exclaimed, "O! that the learned English ministry would inform me least my blood like Abel's cry aloud for vengeance for not satisfying a troubled conscience. How shall I admit or believe the infant of a believer to be made a visible member of a visible church; or fit to be baptized, before it be able to make confession of faith and repentance." Upon which he writes a book called the "Royal Commission of King Jesus," and resigned his living in Kent; Jun. page 85. Mr. Benjamin Cox, the son of a bishop, a graduate of Cambridge, and once a zealous minister of the establishment; Mr. Daniel Dyke of Cambridge, and chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, when Lord Protector of England; Mr. Fisher, distinguished for his knowledge in rhetoric, poetry, Greek and Latin, with a parochial living of 500*l.* per annum, the author of a book called, "Baby Baptism mere Baptism," a severe irony; Mr. Francis Bramfield, a man of illustrious birth, a presbyter of the church of England, who had a licence from the hand of two kings, and the Protector of England, to preach, was afterwards imprisoned when he became a Baptist, and died in prison; Mr. Vavasor Powel, a minister of the high church; Mr. Edward Stennet, of much fame, once a favorite at court, with his two sons, eminent for learning; these all from sound conviction of the great error of infant sprinkling, renounced their livings and their high standing, and became humble, zealous, and indefatigable champions in the cause of believer Baptism and the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. The time would fail me to tell of the many truly great and distinguished men of the present day who, in England, Ireland and Scotland, have renounced the popular systems of established sects and became advocates of the cause we espouse. The only legitimate use that we can make of these names is, to shew that such is the evidence in favor of believer Baptism, being *the only Baptism*, as to force itself into the understanding of the most distinguished men of contrary sentiments, and having every thing on the side of Infant Baptism, to blind their minds and bias

their judgments; and, that the plainness of the holy oracles, and the force of truth is such, as to conquer their prejudices, and what is peculiarly contrary to the nature of man, to cause them to retract, in the most public manner, the errors which they once taught and practised; and to preach the truth which they once opposed. But our faith does not rest upon the testimony of men. Were there not a man on earth practising this ordinance, according to the views of it which we entertain, the scriptures themselves, either in the original, or in the popular translation, affords such convincing evidence as to warrant us to oppose the world, though of one heart and of one mind, in teaching and practising infant sprinkling.

To pay any more attention to Mr R's great criticisms, would be to descend to mere trifling, as he now stands condemned; his own leaders and friends, and my opponents themselves being judges. There is nothing he has stronger in support of his views, than when he says, that if Baptism signifies immersion how could we be said to be immersed into the Holy Spirit—and a child might put this objection to silence, by asking Mr. R. if Baptism signify sprinkling, how could a person be said to be sprinkled into the Holy Spirit. This metaphorical use of the term is explained in the appendix to the preceding Debate. We shall conclude our strictures upon this part of the subject in the words of Mr. Huddleston, a Pede-baptist; a remarkable confession indeed, page 11, "I doubt not but Infant Baptism, by this time, had been nearly expelled from most of the Protestant churches, had it not been for the almost unconquerable strength of custom and tradition." This sentiment I cheerfully subscribe.

To wipe off the disgrace of that persecuting spirit which has characterized the Pede-baptist system, Mr. R. would have us believe that the Baptists arose from the German Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, and that they were originally a turbulent sect of fanatics, subverting all law and order. Better Mr. R. to have purged the Pede-baptists from the blood of so many martyrs, than to have groundlessly aspersed the Baptists. Who was it Mr. R. that burned Servetus, beheaded Gruet and persecuted Castallo Bolsec and Gentilis? The founders of Presbyterianism. Who was it that set on foot a consistorial inquisition at Geneva, for forcing every one to conform to his opinions, and required that the magistrates should punish

whomsoever this consistory condemned? The founder of Presbyterianism. Who was it that wrote a book, a folio volume, on the *right* and *necessity* of burning heretics, entitled, *De haereticis puniendis a civili magistratu*? The second man to the founder of Presbyterianism. What synod proscribed the Catholics and the Anabaptists, calling upon the magistrate to support their decrees? The first Calvinistic synod that ever sat, Anno Domini 1574. Brandt. vol 1, p. 227. Who was it that put to death Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, and riotously destroyed the churches, monasteries, &c. which they termed monuments of Popery? The Reformers in Scotland, under John Knox. Who was it that taught that "it is not *birth* but God's *election* which confers a right to the throne and to magistracy?" John Knox. Who was it that taught that, no promise nor oath made to an enemy of the truth was binding? And that every such enemy in a high station is to be deposed? John Knox. Collier's Eccl. His. vol. 2, page 442. Who was it that told his queen to her face that the "Protestants had a right to take the sword of justice into their hands, and to punish her, as Samuel slew Agag, and as Elias slew Jezebel's prophets?" John Knox, the father of Scotch Calvinists? Stuart's Hist. vol 1, p. 59. What was the answer given to king James by the most "moderate part" of the Scotch Presbyterians, summoned by order of king James, to "inquire whether the Catholic Earls of Huntly Errol and their followers, on making a proper concession, might not be admitted into the church, and be exempt from further punishment?" They answered, that, "Though the gates of mercy are always open for those that repent; yet as these noblemen had been guilty of idolatry, (the Catholic religion) a crime deserving death by the laws both of God and man, the civil magistrate could not legally pardon them, and that, though the church should absolve them, it was his duty to inflict punishment upon them." Robertson's Hist. A. D. 1596. But, says a modern writer, "we need not be surprised at any severity of the Presbyterians against Catholics, when among other penances, ordained by public authority, against their *own members* who should break their own appointed fasts, *whipping* in the church was one." Stuart, vol. 2, page 94. Who from the perusal of these documents, and many others to the same import, that might be produced, will not be amazed to hear a true son of this same sect, once established

by blood, aspersing a people that never shed one drop of human blood in support of their cause, with the riotous scenes of a few religious and political fanatics in Germany, on whom historians bestowed the name of Anabaptists! And that, forsooth, because *two* syllables of their name, correspond with the name of a religious sect, now amounting, in the United States alone, to 250,000 actual members, in good standing in their respective societies!!

We have to regret that a necessity should have been imposed upon us by Mr. R. of exposing scenes of such horrid cruelty in the founders of a religious sect, which now aims at such an high place amongst the present religious sects, and which is so desirous that the history of its origin should pass into oblivion. We have reason to believe that many of the honest members of this community are ashamed of such things, and that did they know the character and views of the original leaders, as well as even we do, they would despise them as much as we possibly could. We would earnestly desire such to reflect upon these facts, and to remember that the Saviour of the world declared, that all who take the sword, in his cause, shall perish with the sword.

Mr. R's base calumny on the Baptist denomination, suggests to me the propriety of making a brief excursion into ecclesiastical history; and of presenting a few gleanings to the inquisitive reader, which will tend to show how ignorant Mr. R. is of the history of the Baptists.

While the Protestant church must date its origin from the 19th of April, 1529—that memorable day on which fourteen cities of Germany *protested* against a decree of the Diet of Spire, which met in the March preceding; while the Presbyterian church must date its origin from the autumn of 1537, the year in which John Calvin published his Confession of Faith, had a *public debate* with Peter Coroli, and constituted a church in Geneva: whilst the Scotch Presbyterians must date their origin from the arrival of John Knox in Scotland from Geneva, who arriving there Anno Domini 1558, and becoming a champion in the cause of Presbyterianism, was denominated the “Scotch Apostle John Knox: while the English Presbyterians must date their origin from Nov. 20, 1572, “when a small Presbyterian church was erected at Wandsworth, a village near London:” whilst the Seceders must date their origin from August, 1733, when Messrs. E. Erskine, W. Wilson, Ar

Moncrief, and J. Fisher, were deposed and excluded from the communion of the Presbyterian church, and became the founders of a new sect: while the Unionists or Scotch Burghers, must date their origin from the year 1747: the Methodists from John Wesley, 1729: the Quakers from George Fox, 1655:—I say, while all these sects are of recent origin, not one of them yet 300 years old—not one of them able to furnish a *model* of their peculiarities from scripture, or antiquity, greater than I have mentioned, the Baptists can trace their origin to apostolic times, and produce unequivocal testimonies of their existence in every century down to the present time; and the *model* of their peculiarities the scriptures themselves afford, as far as the name *Baptist* is concerned. It must be acknowledged that each sect is distinguished by some peculiarity which is generally expressed in the name of it. The history of a sect is the history of a people adhering to one general system of peculiarities, which distinguishes them from all others. The date of the origin of a sect must, then, be the date of the origin of its grand peculiarities. Were we to adopt any other method, we should be obliged to describe sects by that which is not peculiar to them, which would be impossible, for all sects would then be alike. The grand peculiarity, from which the Baptists have their name, is found in the scriptures as a part of Christianity, and is simply this—*To require faith or repentance, as previous to Baptism; and to immerse the subject professing faith and repentance in water, in the name, or into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.* This is the peculiarity from which Baptists have their name; all that believe and practice in this way, are Baptists; and all that do not are not Baptists. I now proceed to show that the Baptists have existed in every century from the Christian era to the present day:

FIRST CENTURY. Anno Domini 33, we read, in a well attested history, of a large Baptist church which was formed and exhibited as a *grand model*, by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, 3000 souls were illumined, led to repentance, converted, baptized, and added to the church. The history of this church, and of many others like it, is clearly and forcibly written by an excellent writer, styled Luke the Physician. This Luke is the oldest ecclesiastical writer in the world. He writes a history of the Christian church for little better

than thirty years. See his Treatise styled "Acts of the Apostles," chap ii. 41, 42, "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the *same* day there were added unto them about 3000 souls: and they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers—praising God. And the Lord added daily to them such as should be saved," or such as were saved. The members, then, of the first Christian church ever planted on earth, gladly received the word *before* they were baptized, and upon the *same* day of their Baptism were added to the church; and thence forward *continued* in the above practices. It is then incontrovertibly evident, that the *first* Christian church planted on earth was, in respect of Baptism, as now distinguished, a *Baptist church*; or a church composed of baptized believers. It is true, it is not called by Luke, a Baptist church, for all the churches were imitators of this first church, and to have called it a Baptist church, would have implied that there was a Pedo-baptist church too, which was a thing unknown in the apostolic age, as all antient historians declare.

The second church that was planted was at Samaria—"Philip went down into Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake—and there was *great joy* in that city. *When* (not before) they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized, both men and women.*" The second church planted on earth was also composed of men and women who professed faith before Baptism; consequently, a Baptist church—Acts viii. 5-13.

The third church of note, and in order of time, was the church of Caesaria, a church interesting to us, inasmuch, as it was a Gentile church, or a Gentile people composed it. This church was evidently a Baptist church—"while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on all them which heard the word*—Then said Peter, can any man forbid *water*, that those should not be baptized, seeing *they have received the Holy Ghost* as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts x. 44 to the close.

To these I might add all the churches mentioned in the New Testament; for there is something said of the Baptism of most of them. Particularly something is said of

the church at Philippi, at Corinth, at Rome, at Ephesus, at Colosse, and of the churches of Galatia, with regard to their Baptism. Of all of these cities and regions it might be said, as was said of the Corinthians, viz. "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." This is the *Sacred Order* of these three words: 1st, to hear, 2d, to believe, and 3d, to be baptized.

The testimonies of the holy oracles reach down to the close of the first century; and these, as has been observed, mention no other kind of churches than those composed of believers, baptized upon a profession of their faith, a fact which should perfectly satisfy the mind of every Christian upon this subject. But there has been a cloud of witnesses in every age attesting the same important truth, viz. that believers are the *only proper subjects* of Baptism; and that immersion is the *only proper action* of Baptism. The testimonies of God are the foundation on which our faith and practice rest; therefore, when we quote other authorities, it is not as foundations, on which the faith of any should rest, either in whole or in part, but to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; who ignorantly assert that the Baptist sentiments are novel, or that the sect is of modern date. Leaving then the sacred oracles, we shall hear what human testimony has to advance upon this topic, and first,

The Magdeburgenses, in their history, cent. 1st, l. 2, p. 496, edition of Basil, 7 tomes, assert—"In the first century they find, that they baptized only the adult or aged," but "*De Infantibus, Baptizatis exempla non legunt*"—of baptized infants they could find no examples." Page 497, they also say—"the manner of baptizing was by dipping or immersing in water, in the name, &c. which was not only agreeable to the import of Baptism, but to the allegory of a death, burial, and resurrection, to which Paul, Peter, and Annanias properly allude."

"Clemens, in the first century, asserts, who they are that are the right subjects of Baptism, viz. "Such as have passed through an examination and received instructions." Morningus, page 2d, as cited by Junius.

Ignatius, in his discourses upon Baptism affirms, "that it ought to be accompanied with faith, love, and patience, after preaching"—Letters to Polycarp, and to the saints at Philadelphia—Dutch Martyrology, cent. 1. See Jacob Du Bois, page 16–22, quoted by Junius.

D. Balchazer Lidius, in his treatise of the church, p. 2,

shews, that the people afterwards called Waldenses, professed and practised Believer Baptism in this century; see also Gildas "De Victoria Aurelii Ambrosii," who proves that the antient Britons in this century also received the gospel and practised Believer's Baptism.

SECOND CENTURY. There is no difference in the practice of the church in this century from the preceding. Most of the distinguished men who lived at the beginning of it had seen and heard the apostles, consequently amongst the churches, there was as yet, no great falling off in the external ordinances. Justin Martyr's public defence of the Christians of the second century, is a sufficient document to show that the Baptist sentiments at that time universally prevailed.

Justin Martyr, second Apol. Ant. Pius, Emperor—"I will declare unto you how we offer up ourselves to God, after that we are received through Christ: Those among us instructed in the faith, are *brought to the water*, then they are baptized therein, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Then we bring the person thus baptized or washed to the brethren, where the assemblies are, that we may pray both for ourselves, and the new illuminated person; that we may be found by doctrine and good works, worthy observers and keepers of the commandments. Then bread and wine being brought to the *chief brother*, he taketh it and offereth praise and thanksgiving to the Father, in the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost. After prayer and thanksgiving the whole assembly saith *Amen*. When thanksgiving is ended by the *chief guide* and the consent of the whole people, the Deacons (as we call them) give to every one present, part of the bread and wine; over which thanks is given; this we call the *Eucharist*, to which no man is admitted but he that believeth the truth of the doctrine, and lives as Christ has taught"—Justin Martyr's 2d Apol. Ant. Pius, Emp. See also Baxter's Saint's Rest, chap. 8, sect. 5.

THIRD CENTURY. Having shewn in the Appendix to the Debate on Baptism that it was about the middle of this century when some errorists began to depart from the common faith and practice of the primitive church, in relation to Baptism, I need not now repeat what I have there written. In addition I would simply observe, that Mr. Baxter in his "Saint's Rest," though such an enemy to immersion, acknowledges, "that Tertullian, Origin, and

Cyprian, who lived in the second and third centuries, do affirm, that in the primitive times none were baptized but such as engaged themselves to obey him." Saint's Rest, 1st ed. part 1, chap. 8, sect. 5.

FOURTH CENTURY. Jerome says, "The Lord commanded his apostles that they should *first* instruct and teach all nations, and *afterwards* should baptize them that were instructed in the mysteries of the faith; for it cannot be that the body should receive the *ordinance* of Baptism, before the soul has received the true faith." Jerome's Comment on Math. xxvii. 19, 20. Athanasius in his third sermon against the Arians says, "Our Saviour hath not simply commanded to baptize, but *first* said, *teach*, then baptize; because true faith proceeds from teaching, and Baptism rightly follows faith." See Mor. book, part 2d, p. 370.

"Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, was baptized upon a profession of his faith, and did afterwards assert for doctrine, that none ought to be baptized but such." See Mataphrastes, l. 1, c. 30, and Morn. p. 366, as quoted by Junius.

During this century there were sundry councils and synods. The council of Laodicea, of Neocesaria, and the synods of this time, agreed in this, "That whosoever were to be baptized should give in their names, and then after due examination should be baptized. And not only great men, and even princes, converted from Paganism were baptized, but even the sons and daughters of believing parents were baptized when arrived at adult years."—A clear proof that Infant Baptism was not yet become general. For the children of believing parents would certainly have been baptized, had any infants in ordinary cases been baptized. Amongst the vast numbers of the children of believers that were baptized in adult years during this century, we shall mention a few men of renown. Basil the great, son of a Christian bishop, was baptized in Jordan, when advanced in years. Gregory, son of Gregory, bishop of Nazianzer, was baptized at the age of twenty. Constantine the great, a Briton born, and king of England, son of Helena, a zealous Christian, was well advanced in years before he was baptized. During his reign most of his British troops were Christians, A. D. 320. Ambrose refused to be baptized till he was chosen bishop of Milan. Chrysostom was born of believing parents, and was educated by Miletus a bishop, yet he was not baptized till the age of twenty-one. Hugo Grotius, while saying this of Chrysos-

tom, adds, "many of the Greeks in every age to this day, keep the custom of deferring the Baptism of their little ones, till they make a profession of their faith." "Erasmus testifies that Jerom was born in the city of Shydon, of Christian parents, was brought up in the Christian religion, and was baptized in the thirtieth year of his age." "Austin, the son of the gracious Monica, being instructed in the faith, was not baptized till thirty." See Osiander's book, cent. 4, l. 3, page 371-380; also, Nauclerus, A. D. 391. Historia Tripartita tells us, "That Theodosius the Emperor was born in Spain, and his parents were both Christians; that he was instructed in the Christian faith, and falling sick at Thessalonica, he was baptized by Achalis." See Dr. Taylor, lib. proph. page 239.

"In this century a corruption pervaded the African churches concerning the taking away of *original sin*; and least any of their infants should die in original sin, they were for having them baptized. Tertullian and many others at first opposed this doctrine, when it began in the third century; but in this century it gained greater credit, and this accounts for the introduction of Infant Baptism."

"Popes and councils in the fourth and fifth centuries, by decrees confirmed the practice of Infant Baptism." "The *Militant* council (a provincial town in Africa) anathematized all those who did not baptize their infants, to save them from original sin. This was occasioned by Pelagius denying original sin, and Austin, a Popish monk, to maintain it said, that Baptism was necessary to cleanse them as soon as born from their original sin."—Junius, 69, 70.

I cannot close the testimonies of the fourth century better than by presenting to the reader the words of Dr. Barlow, doctor of the chair at Oxford, a man eminent for learning. On reviewing the records of antiquity and the arguments of his Pedit-baptist friends, in a letter to a friend, he says, "I do believe and know that there is neither precept nor example for Infant Baptism, nor any just evidence for it, for above 200 years after Christ; that Tertullian condemns it, as an unwarrantable practice. I have read what my learned friends Dr. Hammond and Mr. Baxter and others say in the defence of it; and I confess I wonder not a little that men of such great parts should say so much to so little purpose, for *I have not as yet seen any thing like an argument for it.*" Thus far Dr. Barlow. Jun. 69.

FIFTH CENTURY. In this age there were many public

advocates of the true Baptism. As the object of this brief sketch is merely to produce a *competent* number of witnesses to the truth, that Believer Baptism, or that Baptist principles, were professed, and taught, and practised in every century since the Christian era to the present day, I shall not be too prolix in my quotations.

Chrysostom, whose Baptism we mentioned in the last century, in the fifth century publicly taught, "That the time of grace—or when a man obtained grace) or conversion was the only fit time for Baptism, which," says he, "was the season in which the 3000 in Acts 2d, and others afterwards, were baptized." See Magd. cent. 5. page 368.

"Faustus Regienais, a bishop in France, taught in this age that *the will and desire* of the party that comes to be baptized is necessary."

Evegrius says, "That they who have been instructed in the word of God, were the proper subjects of Baptism." See Merning. page 421–425.

SIXTH CENTURY. Gregory says, "In Baptism the Elect receive the gift of the Spirit, whereby also their spirits or understandings are enlightened in the scriptures, and that by faith in the death of Christ by Baptism their sins are forgiven."—"In this century, the council of Agather decreed, that the articles of faith be *first preached* to the persons to be baptized, *before they are baptized.*" Vicecome's His. page 482.

SEVENTH CENTURY. "In this age the Bracarens council, in Spain, decreed, that no adult persons but such as had been well instructed and *examined*, should be baptized." "The council of Toletanus express the same import—and we find that Paulinus baptized, in the river Trent, in England, a great number of men and women."—See Bead. l. 2, chap. 16, cent. 7, page 145. "In Egypt, in this century, the Christians departed from the faith of the church of Rome, placing it upon the apostolic foundation, that the person should *first believe* before he is baptized." Vice. l. 9, chap. 3.

EIGHTH CENTURY. Bede, who lived in this century, page 220, says, "Men are first to be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, then to be baptized as Christ has taught; *because that without faith it is impossible to please God.*" The learned Haime, on Math. xxviii. 19, says, "In these words is set down the rule how to baptize, that is, that teaching should go before Baptism, that Christ says, teach all na-

tions, then baptize: for he that is to be baptized must first be instructed to believe, what he in Baptism shall receive. In this century the council of Paris, and that of Laodicea decreed, that those who are to be baptized ought first to be instructed in the faith and make a confession of it."

NINTH CENTURY. Rabanus, chap. 4, says, "That the catechism which is the doctrine of faith, must go before Baptism; to the intent that he who is to be baptized, may first learn the mysteries of faith, and, continues he, the Lord Jesus anointed the eyes of him that was born blind, with clay made of spittle, before he sent him to the waters of Shiloah, to signify that he that is to be baptized must first see or be instructed in the faith, concerning the incarnation of Christ, when he that is instructed doth believe, then he is to be admitted to Baptism: that he might know whom he afterwards ought, and in duty is bound, to serve."

Albinus says, "Three things are visible in Baptism, the body, the water, and the administrator; and three things invisible, the soul, *faith*, and the spirit of God, which are all joined by the word of God." Page 220.

Rabanus likewise observes, "That the adults were first to be instructed in the faith, and duly examined before they were baptized; and that as Noah and his family were saved by *water* and the ark, so the faithful are saved by Christ and Baptism." Page 144.

TENTH CENTURY. In this age Smaragdo on Math. xxviii. 19, observes, "Men are to be taught in the faith, then after to be baptized therein, for it is not enough that the body be baptized, but that the soul, by faith, first received the truth thereof." Page 187.

ELEVENTH CENTURY. Anselm says, "That believers are baptized into the death of Christ; that believing his death and conforming thereto, may, as dying with him, live also with him," page 169. Again, says he, "Christian Baptism is the washing of water into the word of life; take away either the water or the word, Baptism ceaseth," page 116. In this century the Waldenses and Albigenses loudly asserted and extensively practised Believer Baptism." Twisk Chron. l. 11, A. D. 1100, page 423. "Peter Brûise, a learned author in Thoulouse, France, and his numerous followers, were zealous asserters and practisers of Baptism after faith and repentance." Dutch Mar. c. 11.

TWELFTH CENTURY. Albertus Magnus says, "The laver of Baptism is not proper but to the illuminated and

called, who can draw virtue from the death of Christ." page 413. Thomas Aquinas says, "That in Baptism God works inwardly, as he dispenseth the ordinance outwardly; there is not only a consecration of the soul to God, but the body, because the whole man, by Baptism, is dedicated to God; for by Baptism we die to the life of sin, and begin to live a new life of grace." page 424. "In this century there was a great spread of those who practised Believer's Baptism." Twisk Chron. l. 18, pp. 528, 529.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY. In this century Jacob Meringus says, "That he had in his hand, in the German tongue, a Confession of the Faith of the Baptists, called Waldenses, which asserts, that in the beginning of Christianity, there was no such thing as baptizing of infants, and that their forefathers practised no such thing, as Johannes Bohemius writes in his second book; and Meringus' History of Baptism part 2d, page 738." Moreover it is observed by many "That this faith and practice made a prodigious spread through Poland, Lombardy, Germany and Holland." Montanus, p. 86. Mering. page 737.

It is a fact also worthy of record, that in this century, A. D. 1311, the Pope in the council of Ravenna declared, that "*Sprinkling and dipping were indifferent*," and that the subjects of Baptism might have their choice. This no doubt eased the consciences of many.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY. In addition to the evidence cited above, which also bears upon this century, as, indeed, the documents presented with respect to any century always have an important bearing upon that immediately succeeding; we find that "Carlous, bishop of Meyland, did exhort the ministers under his charge, that they should first teach *the faith*; and that *only* upon a confession of faith, and a good conversation, they should administer Baptism." Mering. p. 740. "The confession of the Thaborites, in the year 1431, confirms, that in this century there were many Baptists, especially in Bohemia; they say, "We do from our hearts acknowledge that the ordinance of Baptism is a washing, which is performed with water, which according to Christ's words doth hold out (i. e. in a figure) the washing of the soul from sin according to Christ's command." Math. xxviii. 19. Mering. page 743.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY. In this century the Baptists spread amazingly—Mer. page 772. Twisk says in his Chronology, page 930, "That in the year 1507, the Waldenses, who

were Baptists, were much spread in Hungary." That these Waldenses were Baptists, Montanus, Impress 2d, says; "That the Waldenses, in the public declarations of their faith to the French king, A. D. 1521, assert in the strongest terms the baptizing of believers, and deny that of infants." Balthazer Lydias testifies, "That at this time their several churches in Thessalonica in Greece, supposed to have continued successively from the apostles' time, agreeing with the faith of the Waldenses." See B. L. Treatise 3, of the Waldenses. "Two persons were sent from the churches in Thessalonica, to find some of the same faith with themselves, and coming into Switzerland they were taken prisoners and put into the castle of Passaw, who declared to many, that they had in their care (at Thessalonica) the original of Paul's Epistles, which he sent to them." Mer. page 739.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY. It is scarcely necessary to continue the history further down than this century, as almost every person knows that there were myriads of advocates for Believer Baptism in this century. I shall, however, mention a few distinguished advocates of this cause, who flourished in this century. Jacob De Roer, a prisoner in Bridges in Flanders, steadfastly owned and maintained as follows, viz. "That the Baptism which the apostles taught and practised must *needs be* after believing, because it is for the *burying* of sin, the *bath* or evidence of regeneration, the covenant of a Christian's life, the putting on the body of Christ, and planting into the true olive tree Christ Jesus, and for the right entrance into the spiritual ark, whereof Christ Jesus is the builder." Dutch Martyrology, p. 13.

Erasmus is very particular in his paraphrase upon Math. xxviii. 19, upon this subject; his words are, "When you have taught them the word of God, if they then believe and receive it, and are ready and willing to embrace the doctrine of the Gospel, then let them be baptized with water in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, that they may be written among the number (of the brethren) who trusted in Christ, and were, through the merits of his death, freed and washed from their sins, and received to be the children of God." Math. xxviii. 19.

The great Beza, who wrote a translation and notes upon the Bible, says, upon 1st Cor. vii. 14, "That to permit children to be baptized was unheard of in the primitive church, where every one ought to be instructed in the faith before he is baptized."

The eminent Bucer says, in his book entitled, *The Ground Work and Cause*, "That in the congregation of God, confession of sin is always first before Baptism; and that in the beginning of the church, no man was baptized and received into the congregation, but those who, through hearing the word, wholly gave themselves over to Christ."

To these I might add the names of many, or most of all the eminent reformers; for although many of them died Pedobaptists in practice, yet in theory they were Baptists, and often spoke as Baptists speak. Luther himself declares, "Of old the ordinance of Baptism was administered to none except to those who acknowledged and confessed their faith"—and again, "Baptism is a Greek word, and may be translated a *dipping*, when we dip something in water, that it may be covered with water; and though it may be, for the most part, altogether abolished, for neither do they *dip* the whole children, but *only sprinkle* them with a little water; they ought nevertheless to be *wholly* dipped, and presently drawn out again, for that the etymology of the word seems to require. I would have those who are to be baptized, to be *wholly dipped* into the water, as the word imports and the mystery doth signify." Tom 1, De Baptismo, fol. 71, and tom 2, fol. 19. Of the same opinion were Grotius, Zuinglius, Bullinger, Melancton, Chaucer and Field. That those men should have acted contrary to their professed principles is to be regretted; it is, however, a very common thing. There are not a few, even in our own time, who like Mr. Baxter, *rail* against Baptists; and like the same Mr. Baxter will say, that Infant Baptism is a presumptuous thing. Mr. Baxter's words are, in his comment on the Eunuch—"The constant order of the Gospel is that Baptism must follow faith"—he adds, "indeed it is no better than an impious profanation of the ordinance, if it go without faith, if the *party* seek it without faith, or if the pastor administer it without a profession of faith."

It would be imposing upon the reader, and an imputation of his understanding, to be more copious in furnishing documents to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who would assert that the Baptist denomination grew out of the wild, fanatic, enthusiastic Anabaptists of Germany. That men professing Baptist principles have acted in many instances incorrectly, is a very common truth. That some individuals professing Baptist principles might have been in that, or any other insurrection, may be conceded, with-

out, at the same time, yielding that the Baptists arose from the Anabaptists of Germany. As truly might it be said, that the church of Christ in Jerusalem, planted A. D. 33, arose out of the Anabaptists of Germany in the sixteenth century—Yes, Mr. R. with equal truth and honesty might have said that all Christians originated from the Mahomedans, or Socinians, as that the Baptists arose from the Anabaptists of Germany.

While on the subject of the antiquity of the Baptists, and of the evidence of their existence since the birth-day of Christianity, I will, for the entertainment and information of the common reader, give, in a few sentences, the history, in miniature, of Christianity in England, or rather Britain, whose history is interesting to so many.

The first notices of Britain, on the historic page are from Roman pens. England was conquered first by the Romans, next by the Saxons, then by the Danes, and lastly by the Normans. Speed tells us in his history, "That the Romans found the Britons a barbarous and savage people, with naked bodies and painted skins; hence, the name *Brit*, paint, and *tain*, a region." Gildas, the most authentic of British historians, affirms, that the Britons received the Gospel under Tiberious Cæsar, Emperor, under whom Christ suffered; and that many Evangelists were sent unto them by the apostles. Fox tells us, from an antient book of English antiquities, page 139, part 1st, that an epistle was recorded, written to Lucius the king of Britain, A. D. 169, by Eleutherius, from which it is plain, that Lucius had embraced the faith of Christ. Origin and Tertullian declare that, "There are places in Britain inaccessible to the Romans, but they were subdued to Christ." Barteus, cent. 1, fol. 37, says, "That Chrysostom and other Greek fathers said of the first British churches, that they were constituted exactly according to Christ's pattern." Jeffery, "*De Britannorum gestis*," chap. 4, informs, that while the antient Britons possessed the country, they kept themselves sound in the faith—But, A. D. 448, the English Saxons began to possess Britany, and in 593 nearly completed the conquest of the Britons. In 596, Gregory, bishop of Rome, sent *Austin* the monk, into Britain to bring the Saxons into conformity to the church of Rome, and the Britons with them. The antient Britons, as their rights had been trampled on, since the descent of Julius Cæsar, retired to Wales and concentrated two large Christian communities, one

at Bangor in the north, and one at Cair Leon on the south. Hence the Welsh were called the antient Britons. *Austin*, after his arrival kept a council near Worcestershire, where he invited the British ministers; some of them came. He urged them to conform to the rites and ceremonies of Rome. They zealously refused and strongly opposed *Austin*. In the *Chronicles of Wales*, their antient bard Tallyossyn sings—

“Wo be to that shepherd! I say,
That will not watch his flock alway,
As to his office doth belong;
Wo be to him! who doth not keep,
From *Roman* wolves, his sheep
With staff and weapon strong.”

Austin threatened but in vain; he then coaxed them to observe *three* things, and he would leave others to their own discretion. “First, to observe *Easter day*. Second, to give *Christendom* to children. Third, to preach to the Saxons as I have directed you.” They would not. He then stirred up the Saxons against them, and dispersed them. Their establishment at Bangor was razed, they were persecuted by fire and sword, for not accepting those three commands. Hence it is plain that Infant Baptism, or Infant Christendom, was not practised by the antient Britons, until at least the seventh century. Another fact demonstrative of the same, is that Constantine the great, son of Constantius the Emperor, born in Britain, A. D. 305, son of Helenia, a zealous Christian lady, was not baptized until he professed faith—I say if Constantine, son of Constans or Constantius, a professed Christian, and of Helenia, a professed Christian, was not baptized till he professed faith, it is a strong argument that Infant Baptism was not practised by the antient Britons. Again, when Pelagius spread his errors, the antient Britons sent to France for aid to suppress his errors, “their brethren in France sent them Germanus and Supus, who were mighty in the scriptures, they converted many and baptized great multitudes in a river near Chester, upon a profession of their faith.” “*Austin* also was so ignorant of the rite of Baptism to infants, and so unable to oppose the antient Britons, not finding it in the scriptures, he wrote to Pope Gregory to be resolved in it; see his tenth Interrogatory, Ex. decreto, Greg. lib. 1st, Council, tom 2. See also Hugo Grotius on Math. xix. 14. Bede also informs, “That when the Britons in the seventh century were oppressed by the Sax-

ons, that the son of a British king was baptized upon his embracing the faith; and that Paulinus baptized both men and woman in the river Trent at noon day." Bede, l. 2, c. 16, cent. 7, p. 145. There was an intimate correspondence between those antient Christians, afterwards called Waldenses, and these antient Britons. Morland, in his preface to the French Bible (the first Bible ever printed) says, "The Waldenses have always had the full enjoyment of the holy scriptures, ever since they were enriched with the same by the apostles, having in fair manuscripts preserved the Bible entire in their own tongue." These Waldenses, as I have observed, living in the Alps, France, Germany, and Holland, as the English chronicles manifest, corresponded with the antient Britons, and finally emigrated to England and Wales. For in the time of William the Conqueror, and his son William Rufus, Bishop Usher says, "they abound in England." In the time of Henry the 1st, 1100, the bishop tells us, "that the Waldenses spread their doctrine all Europe over, and in England in particular; and from these Waldenses sprang the Lollards from one Walter Lollard, a great preacher at that time in England amongst them." Page 242. Lollard flourished in the time of Edward the 3d; from whom sprang John Wickliff, a graduate of Merton college, Oxford, and a Baptist; who taught in the reign of Edward 3d, A. D. 1371, "*That believers after the example of Christ should be baptized in pure water. And that it was not lawful for believers who had received the Baptism of the spirit to neglect the Baptism of water.*" Fla. Illyricus Catal, p. 403.—"From Wickliff, Usher dates the *English* reformation. Especially as he translated the Bible from Latin to English, and gave England its first English Bible." It would appear that many received Wickliff's views on some points, that did not receive the whole of them, hence some of his followers were Baptists, and some were not. In Bohemia, as well as in England, many of the Wickliffites, but most commonly called Lollards, were Baptists. Mr. Fox says, "That a gentleman being at Oxford, from Bohemia, upon his return to Prague to the university there, took with him many of Wickliff's books, and communicated them to John Huss, an eminent Bohemian preacher, who embraced the sentiments of Wickliff, and became a zealous defender of them. His disciples were called Hussites." "Queen Ann, wife of Richard 2d, was a Bohemian and sister to

the king of Bohemia, who brought many of her Bohemian servants with her, who were in profession Waldenses; these persons being the same in principle as Wickliff, conveyed more of Wickliff's works to Prague, and thus spread the Baptist principles in Bohemia."

The Wickliffites, most commonly called Lollards, from Walter Lollard their great preacher, were much persecuted, and the prison to which they were sent was called "*Lollard's tower*"; occasionally, too, they were in favor with the court, particularly in the reign of Rich. 2d, and Edward 3d. In one of their reigns, Mr. Fox says, a book of conclusions for reformation was exhibited by the Lollards to Parliament. In the reign of Henry the 4th, they were cruelly persecuted, (*because having no command nor example*) they would not baptize new born infants. Dutch Martyr. fol. 774. "In the reign of Henry the 5th, they were cruelly used; Lord Bobham and 38 more were hung up in chains and burnt. Hence the place is yet called *Tyburn*, from their tying them up first and then burning them."—Fuller's Ecc. His. In the reign of Henry the 6th, 400 of them suffered great hardships, many of them death, for slighting Infant Baptism, and especially for saying that the infants of believers need not be baptized, and that if infants died without Baptism, they might, notwithstanding, be saved. "For this they suffered many things and some of them death." See Dutch Mar.—Fox's Acts, and Mon. pages 867, 868, 918.

In the reign of Edward the 4th, Henry the 7th, and Henry the 8th, their sufferings much increased. Pope Innocent had appointed Baptism to infants and enjoined it in the most solemn manner, namely, no Baptism, no salvation. Finding his infallibility not respected, he was enraged and this is assigned as one cause of their sufferings during those reigns, or at least during a part of them. A decree was passed enjoining it upon all the true sons of the church to suppress all books that had been written by any of the Reformers, particularly Wickliff's, Frith's and Tindal's, "because they contained the principles of the old Lollards or New Reformers, or as the Catholics called them by way of reproach, (as Mr. Ralston) the Anabaptists." Many suffered in 1538. Seven Baptists that came from Holland were imprisoned, and two of them burnt at Smithfield."—Stow's chronicle, p. 576. In 1535, twenty-two Baptists were apprehended and ten put to death—Fox's Acts, vol.

2, p. 315. In 1539, sixteen men and women were banished for opposing Infant Baptism; and on their going to Delph in Holland, were pursued and prosecuted for being Baptists and put to death for the same; the men were beheaded and the women drowned"—Dutch Mart. lib. 2, p. 123.

"During the reign of Edward the 6th, there was a respite to the Baptists, and though there was in Edward's reign an act of general pardon, yet the bigotted party got the Baptists excepted, and many of them were put to death." Hugh Latimer's Sermons on Lent, p. 73.

I pass over the history of Cranmer, Ridley and Rogers, who having persecuted others, were themselves persecuted unto death, as a just retribution, and an awful monument to others.

The Baptists in bloody Queen Mary's reign were numerous and much persecuted—Fox's Acts, vol. 3. p. 606. There were 800 persons put to death for religion in two years of her reign, many of them were Baptists. "In Queen Elizabeth's reign, though upon the whole called a good queen, yet many retained in her privy council were privy counsellors in Mary's reign, and consequently persecution against the Baptists continued. The writ, "*De Heretico Comburendo*," that only hung up in terrorem for seventeen years, was taken down and put in execution upon some Baptists that were *burned* at Smithfield; and the Queen by proclamation ordered all Anabaptists to quit the land, natives or foreigners, under the penalty of imprisonment and loss of goods." Dr. Wall as quoted by Junius, page 47.

In 1608, the 6th year of James' reign, Clapham writes a book called "*Errors on the right hand*," in which he states, "That the Baptists taught that repentance must precede Baptism:"—and that when any one would say, I am of opinion there is no true Baptism on earth, the Baptists would say—"say not so, my son, the congregation I am of can, and doth, administer, true Baptism." These alledged errors were opposed and vindicated during this reign with great energy. "A plain and well grounded treatise on Baptism was published," and the Baptist principles so advanced that James decreed to seize the estates of those heretics, which drove Puritans and Baptists in large numbers to America. From James' time to the present it is universally known that the Baptists have increased in Britain in a sort of geometrical ratio. Thus I have shewn,

that even in England, the Baptists have continued from the apostolic times to the present day, as also that there have been in every century advocates for Baptist principles. I have presented but a few of the documents which are possessed upon this subject, but these we supposed sufficient for our present purpose. With all these documents and facts lying before us, let us hear again the Rev. Samuel Ralston—"It is unquestionably certain," says he, "that the present Baptist churches, both in Europe and America, are sprung from the Anabaptists who started up in Germany at the commencement of the reformation!!!" Yes, from the Munster madmen in 1522!! "*Credat Judaeus Apella, non ego.*"

Mr. R. is a great admirer of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, and would, like Mr. Mosheim, bestow gratuitously the harshest epithets on the Baptists—Yet, this same Mosheim, with the mass of evidence before him in favor of the antiquity of the Baptists, whom he slanderously calls Anabaptists, is constrained to say, that their origin is *hid* in the *remote depths of antiquity*. His words are, "The *true origin* of that sect which *acquired* the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of Baptism to those who came over to their communion, and derived the name of *Menonists* from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is *hid* in the *remote depths of antiquity*, and is, of consequence, difficult to be ascertained." Mosh. vol. 4, p. 424. This *concession*, from a *noted enemy*, in a great measure proves (had I no other proof) the correctness of the proposition I assumed, and documented with so many extracts, viz. *That the Baptists commenced on the day of Pentecost and have continued from that time till now.*

We cannot subscribe the maxim which saith, "ignorance is the mother of devotion," nor can we excuse that ignorance of history which caused Mr. R. to fix the origin of the Baptists at Munster. If his assertion did not proceed from ignorance, it must have proceeded from something worse. For it is the offspring of either ignorance or malevolence.

We must confess that we find more honesty and candour in Roman Catholics, and much more consistency too, on the subject of infant sprinkling, than in most of the works published on this subject by other Pedo-baptists. They at once acknowledge, that it is not to be found in

the *written* word of God, but in the traditions of the church only. These they hold tantamount to scripture. A very learned Doctor of the Catholic church whose title is "The Rt. Rev. John Milner, D. D. V. A. F. S. A. London and Cath. Acad. Rome," in a late publication, issued from a Philadelphia press, in 1820, addressed to the Lord Bishop of St. Davids, challenges the Protestants on their admitting and acting upon the authority of the traditions of the church of Rome on some subjects, and asks them a very hard question, why they reject the authority of the church on other subjects. By the phrase "*the church*," he always means the Romish church, for he acknowledges no other church. His words are, page 316—"Indeed Protestants are forced to have recourse to *the tradition of the church* for determining a great number of points which are left *doubtful* in the sacred text; particularly with respect unto the two sacraments which they acknowledge From the doctrine and practice of *the church alone*, they learn that though Christ our pattern was baptized in a river, and the Ethiopian Eunuch was led by Philip *into the water*, for the same purpose the application of it by infusion or aspersion is valid; and that though Christ said "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," infants are susceptible of the benefits of Baptism who are incapable of making an act of faith." Often we have called infant sprinkling a tradition of Popery, and here a high Roman dignitary acknowledges it. Yea, and tells the bishop of St. Davids, that from his church alone, Protestants received it!!

How much more consistent this, than to attempt to prove infant sprinkling from forced, distorted, unnatural applications and interpretations of scripture. A learned clergyman lately took for his text to prove that Infant Baptism was a bounden duty, Revel. vii. 3, "Hurt not the earth till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads," i. e. sprinkled infants in their foreheads!! Another to prove sprinkling, preaches from Isaiah lii. 15, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," i. e. baptize them!! The whole context and the original term has no more to do with sprinkling infants than with making a pilgrimage to the temple at Mecca. The clause is rendered by Junius and Tremellius in their Latin Bible, the best translation of the Old Testament extant, "Ita persperget stupore muttas gentes." The Septuagint uses the term

thaumasetai, tantamount to "*persperget* stupore;" this, in plain English is, "he will fill, or he will cover with astonishment many nations." Let us now read the whole verse, Isaiah lii. 15, and observe the consistency of the Septuagint and Junius' and Tremellius' version, with the scope of the context—"So shall he astonish many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." But, behold this proves infant sprinkling!! Nebuchadnezzar's being wet (*ebapthe*) with the dew, or in the dew, is the only instance brought from the Old or New Testament, to shew us, that the word *ebapthe* must signify to sprinkle at least once in the sacred volume. But was the subject sprinkled with dew, or wet, or washed, or enveloped in dew? Is the word used here metonymically or literally? Is the *old* or the *new* theory of the dew to be brought to prove the *manner* in which he was wet? O, yes, all these things must be discussed, and the learned gentleman gains vast fame from his ingenuity in proving that in consequence of Nebuchadnezzar's face being sprinkled with dew, his *whole* body was wet with dew! That the words *dip*, *sprinkle*, and *pour*, are all *one* and *the same*, is the sum of all the learned criticisms of Pedo-baptists upon this topic. Although in two verses they all occur in their distinct meaning, and are never once confounded. We shall request some of the ingenious Pedo-baptists to give us a sermon on Levit. iv. 6, 7, on these two verses—"And the priest shall (*bapsei*) *dip* his finger in the blood, and (*profranei*) *sprinkle* of the blood seven times before the Lord—and shall (*ekchei*) *pour* all the blood at the bottom of the altar." From this text let him prove that *dip*, *pour*, and *sprinkle*, are all the same action, and then we shall give him another text. Until a Pedo-baptist does this, all his criticisms are but vain and noisy breath.

The documents which we have brought forward at this time have not been elicited by any supposed merit in Mr. R's Review. We are glad of the opportunity his Review gave us of exhibiting a few of the documents we possess on this subject. And it is to be hoped that every attempt made to prop the tottering system will afford similar opportunities of bringing forth more. We are glad to hear that the Doctors are laying their heads together and contriving new bulwarks, because we believe that the truth

always gains ground by discussion. If Satan had let the Lord and his apostles alone, the cause would never have triumphed. If England had let Buonaparte alone, he never would have conquered Europe. If the Pope had let Luther alone, the Reformation would have made slow progress. And if the Devil had not deceived our first parents, the victories of grace would never have been sung.

Had not the "three letters" came recommended by twelve of the great luminaries of Presbyterianism, we should not have deemed them worthy of notice, as they are by no means a *Review of the Debate*, but a mere excuse for a Review, because we presume no better could be found. Mr. W. is much more prudent than Mr. R. he has been writing for a long time, as we are informed, and has actually got his piece in the press, or very near to it. But he has proceeded with great caution. And we understand that as soon as he was aware of these Strictures getting on the way, he resolved to keep his remarks back until he saw how it would fare with friend Ralston, and he is now guarding his little work from the danger of being strangled just at its birth. Perhaps it may appear soon after this edition gets into circulation. We ardently wish for, we court discussion—"Magna est veritas et prevalebit." Great is the truth, and mighty above all things, and shall prevail. We constantly pray for its progress, and desire to be valiant for it. *Truth is our riches.* Blessed are they that possess it in their hearts, who know its value, who feel its power, who live under its influence. They shall lie down in the dust in peace, they shall rest from their labors in hope, and in the morning of the resurrection they shall rise in glory and be recompensed for all their trials and sufferings in its support. *God himself is truth.* All truth proceeds from him, and the *saving truth* came by Jesus Christ, who is the way, the *truth*, and the life. The Devil is the father of lies, of all error. The means which he uses for its support are the lusts of men; his reward is a present one, and a poor one. It is sweet to the carnal taste, but the end thereof is death—"Wisdoms ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

We present the public with a letter which we received some time after we commenced these Strictures. We designedly omitted some things which we found ably handled in it, and we recommend it to the attentive perusal of all our readers as containing our sentiments, especially, to the consideration of Mr. Ralston.

November 21, 1821.

DEAR SIR—

I am one, amongst many, that have read, with considerable interest, the substance of the Debate on Baptism, between you and Mr. John Walker, which, upon the whole, appears to contain a fair and pointed challenge to Pedo-baptists of every description to defend, if they can, their present practice of infant sprinkling, by arguments much more cogent and decisive, than those advanced by Mr. Walker in the course of that debate. I was also made to believe that this would be the case, from the many reports I have heard of answers proposed and intended, by several of the professional advocates for that practice; but how it is that none of them have proceeded to justify this reasonable expectation, which both the work itself, and their declarations concerning it, have concurred to excite, is not easy to determine; except it be, that they have no better arguments to offer, than those that have been already produced. You may perhaps think, that the writer of this has not seen Mr. Samuel Ralston's brief review, published in the *Presbyterian Magazine*, Nos. 6, 8, 11, 12, of last year. Not so, sir, I have seen that performance, but cannot consider it as the threatened, the promised, and much expected answer or answers, that the public mind was led to anticipate, for the reasons above assigned. Nor, indeed, can I consider it as an answer at all; not merely on account of its not being so called, (for it only bears the general and harmless title of a review) but for want of the two grand intrinsic and essential properties of an answer, I mean the matter and form essential to such a work; for instead of selecting your principal arguments from scripture, from translators, and from church history, contained in your replies to Mr. Walker; or in your attempts to give, in the appendix to said Debate, correct views of several important passages, which have been greatly misrepresented and abused by the advocates for infant sprinkling; or fairly meeting and controverting any of the allegations expressly and pointedly opposed to the theory and practice of Pedo-baptists, in the hundred questions subjoined; he contents himself, and amuses his readers, with stating his own views of certain things relative to the subject; with misrepresenting yours, for the most part, where he pretends to quote; with presenting us with false principles of interpretation; with putting into the mouths of apostles, and even into the mouth of God himself, in certain places, what was neither said nor meant; and lastly, through the whole of his performance, making such an abundant and unsparing use of the most harsh, contemptuous and ill-natured language, that I suppose no modern production of the same size, and containing so little argument, can be found much to exceed it in this respect. This formidable performance, so replete with reproachful language, and loose self-preferring declamation, in whatsoever light we are to view it, whether as answer, strictures or review, is detailed in piecemeal, huddled up in a miscellaneous periodical publication, amidst a variety of other matter, as if the author meant to conceal it as much as possible; the work in which it is interspersed having but a very limited circulation in this western country. But it may be sufficient for the majority to hear that the Debate has been answered, and if any should be so incredulous as not to believe it, the thing might be proved upon oath, by competent witnesses, that certain letters to that effect, appeared in the aforesaid numbers, under the signature of S. R. and this should suffice, especially in an age of such limited means of information! For my part, I could heartily wish to give it greater publicity, and for this purpose would not grudge the labour of transcribing the greater part of it, if you, sir, would condescend to give it a place in some of your miscellaneous publications; as I hear you are preparing something of that nature for the press.—In the mean time, I shall content myself with making a few extracts illustrative of the foregoing remarks. See *Mag. No. 6. p. 250*, where Mr. R. after stating his dissent from Mr. W. respecting his view of the covenant of circumcision, proceeds to inform us that it was an ecclesiastical covenant, or a covenant whereby Jehovah was pleased to bind himself, by the seal of circumcision, to send a redeemer of the family of Abraham, into the world, to preserve in his family a visi-

ble church, until that redeemer should come," &c. Under what signature or upon what authority does Mr. R attempt to authenticate all this? I find none adduced, except the authoritative declaration with which he ushers in the above statement, viz. *I answer*. Not satisfied, however, with Mr. R's say so, and appealing to the only authentic documents of the Divine proceedings with Abraham, I mean the covenant transactions recorded Gen. 15th and 17th chapters, I find not in either of these covenant transactions, a single word about a church, or a redeemer, nor of course concerning the preservation of such a church in his family, till the redeemer should come, &c.—but "thy seed shall be innumerable as the stars of heaven;" xv. 5—and "unto thy seed have I given this land," 18—and xvii. 4, "thou shalt be a father of many nations"—5, "for a father of many nations have I made thee"—6, "and I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee"—8, "I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance, and I will be their God"—9, "therefore thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations"—10, "this is my covenant which thou shalt keep: Every man child among you shall be circumcised"—13, "and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Now I would ask Mr. R. and all that are favoured with the bible, is there a single word in all the specifications expressly contained in these covenant transactions, concerning Jehovah's binding himself by the seal of circumcision, or in any wise whatsoever, to send a redeemer of the family of Abraham, into the world? &c. &c. 'Tis true, God had promised to Abraham long before he was pleased to favour him with either of the covenant transactions referred to, that he would make of him a great nation, and that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed; which promise is again repeated, Gen. xxii. 17, 18. But does it hence follow, that the covenants referred to, include any thing more than what is specified in them? Or did Jehovah bind himself for any thing, by virtue of those transactions, which is not explicitly contained in them? Is it not adding to his word to say that he did so? And why call a covenant ecclesiastical, wherein there is no mention made of such a society, but only of the future existence of a nation or nations; and of the requisite provisions for the subsistence and preservation of such a society; distinguished from all others, by a certain definite portion of land for their inheritance, and by a peculiar mark in the flesh of their males. Does not the covenant that expressly guarantees these things, look very like a national covenant? And if it be lawful to impose names from the obvious intention and nature of things, may we not justly call it by this name, from the items explicitly specified in it, viz. Kings, nations, territories, &c.? Mr. R. after declaring as above, "that the covenant of circumcision was an ecclesiastical covenant, containing the promise of a redeemer, and securing the existence of a church in the family of Abraham, with all necessary means for its edification till the redeemer should come," next proceeds to state and oppose your views of that covenant, namely: "that its promised blessings were temporal, every one temporal; that circumcision conveyed no spiritual blessings to the Jews; that it guaranteed that they should be a numerous and powerful nation; that God would be their king, and that they would individually inherit the land of Canaan." Without referring us to the page whence he adduces these quotations, by which we might judge, if your views were fairly and fully quoted, he calls them bold and unscriptural assertions, without attempting to shew us from the proper authority, I mean from the covenant itself, or from any scriptural exposition of it, that they are so. He should certainly have quoted some of the promises of the covenant of circumcision, which expressly secure spiritual blessings to the specified subjects; or at least some of the writings of Moses the great prophet of that dispensation, under whose ministry the promised nation was brought into a distinct national existence, with its peculiar laws and ordinances of divine service in a worldly sanctuary, all suited to its national and temporary existence, under its Divine lawgiver and king. But has he done this? Has he so much as attempted it? He well knew he need not—

for from the beginning of the 15th of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy; there is not a single promise of regeneration and eternal life made to the covenanted seed of Abraham, as such, either by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, Gen. xvii. which with that recorded in the xv. most explicitly secured their national existence, and as expressly determined the boundaries of their inheritance; or yet by virtue of the Sinai covenant, which raised them up into a national existence; no nor even to their most punctual observance of all the moral and religious institutes, laws and ordinances enjoined upon them. No surely, for if *that righteousness* which entitles to eternal life, came by circumcision or the law, (to the observance of which it virtually bound the subjects, Gal. v. 3.) then Christ is dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21. Instead, however, of appealing to the proper authority, as above stated, in order to support his bold impeachment, he refers us to the declarations of the Apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians; in the former of which, Rom. iii. the Apostle is manifestly stating the superior advantages of the Jews over the Gentiles; the chief of which, he tells us, was, that unto them were committed the oracles of God, 2d v.—and concludes with declaring, 20th v. that not one of them, nor indeed any of the human family, could be justified by the law imposed upon them in those oracles. And in the more particular enumeration of their privileges, ix. 4th and 5th, they are all summed up in externals, which plainly shews that all the national privileges conferred upon that people, by virtue or in consequence of the covenant of circumcision, did not secure to them nor any of them, merely considered as such, the enjoyment of the internal spiritual blessings of salvation; as the Apostle most explicitly declares in the forecited chapter, Rom. ix. from the 4th to the 13th verse. But not so the specified subjects of baptism, under the new covenant, which are only believers; as it is written, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” And this I understand to be fully and fairly your meaning, in the assertions referred to by Mr. R.—and not only so, but in the whole scope of the argument in opposition to inferring the baptism of infants from the covenant of circumcision. And, indeed, till Mr. R. or some more able advocate for infant sprinkling, clearly prove that the specified subjects, and promised privileges of circumcision and of baptism, are the same, and that sprinkling and baptizing are also the same, arguing from the one to the other to establish the former, and asserting contrary to the letter and analogy of the holy scripture, to vindicate the latter, must ultimately fail; and bring into disgrace and contempt the vindicators of such absurdities: Now Mr. R. has not so much as professedly attempted to do either. For though he appears as strongly disposed to assert, and with as little shew of argument as any modern disputant, whose works I have seen; yet he has not ventured to assert, that eternal life is explicitly and immediately promised to the specified subject of circumcision; nor that faith is the specified qualification of those that were appointed to receive it; nor yet, that to baptize, literally and properly signifies to sprinkle. The confessed result of his criticisms or critical review of this part of the subject amounts to this: “That nothing perfectly decisive respecting the mode of administering baptism can be legitimately inferred from the word baptizo, nor from the prepositions connected with it; so, of course, as far as the meaning of language is concerned, we can know nothing certainly about it.” After this frank confession of a professed linguist, what may the unlearned think of the vague uncertainty of the sacred records? Or what can Mr. R. himself plead in favour of his own practice? Having rendered the language of Christ perfectly unintelligible upon this subject, every man is left at perfect liberty to follow his own fancy, either to make any use of water he pleases in the Divine name, or, if he be conscientious not to take the name of God in vain, by quoting it to sanction he knows not what, he must feel obliged, upon principle, to refrain from acting, till a new and certain revelation be obtained from heaven, clearly informing him what God would have him to do. And certainly upon Mr. R.’s decision he would be quite justifiable in so doing. This way of treating the scriptures is evidently to render the word of God of none effect; for if the obvious, radical and constructive meaning of words

and phrases, according to their common and received acceptation, does not certainly convey the meaning of him that uses them, then there is an end to all certainty of communication; the grand use of language as a medium of communication between heaven and earth, is made void, and the faith and obedience of the worshipper is rendered impossible. Another instance of false criticism presents itself in the same letter, where the writer asserts, "that 'of such,' and as 'little children,' are entirely dissimilar in signification; the former always referring to persons, the latter to character;" contrary to the fixed and obvious meaning of language. One example shall suffice to evince the futility of the above criticism. Paul to the Corinthians, speaking of the vilest characters, says, "such were some of you, but ye are washed," &c. 1st Cor. vi. 11. The reviewer's appeal to Gal. iii. 8, to prove that spiritual privileges, or the blessings of spiritual and eternal life belonged to the covenant of circumcision, appears as injudicious and irrelevant as the foregoing. The Apostle is evidently treating of free justification by faith, independent of circumcision and the law; and of Abraham's privilege in this respect, and of the promulgation of the gospel to him in favour of all nations, before the existence of that covenant, saying, "in thee shall all nations be blessed;" and this while he was yet in Ur of the Chaldees, thirty years before the covenant of circumcision took place; and for the sake of which it did take place, as a means to an end, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; which covenant, with the whole of its appendages, the Apostle is here contrasting with the gospel, and rejects as opposite to it in its nature, obligations and tendencies; the whole of which he calls flesh, verse 3. Now, surely, if justification by faith, and the enjoyment of eternal blessedness, had been the object and intention of that covenant, the Apostle could not have spoken of it, and rejected it as inconsistent with the gospel, as he most pointedly and expressly does in this epistle, testifying to every man, that if he became circumcised, Christ should profit him nothing; that he thereby became a debtor to do the whole law, and that, of course, he was fallen from grace. Surely then, if circumcision sealed such an obligation upon the subjects of it, (which the Apostle here takes for granted, as supposing he had sufficiently proved) and if baptism be come in its room, it must answer the same, or at least a similar purpose, if language have any meaning; and if so, must necessarily infer condemnation instead of salvation. Moreover, if it was an ecclesiastical ordinance of initiation, as the reviewer teaches, then the females under that dispensation, stood absolutely excluded; whether on account of their incapacity, as the modern Jews suppose, who hold that women have no souls, or on account of their utter unworthiness, (the first female being the first transgressor) we are not informed; but from whatever cause, it is certain it did not include them—and yet "infant baptism is come in the room of infant circumcision, and can be clearly inferred from it."—So say Pedobaptists, and so argues their zealous and learned advocate, Mr. R. Yet, with all his learning, I am credibly informed, that upon a certain occasion not very long since, he openly declared from the pulpit, that according to the meaning which Baptists affix to Acts, viii. 33, he could not tell whether Philip baptised the Eunuch, or the Eunuch him. So confounding it seems, are the most obvious conceptions of plain common sense, to men of a certain deep metaphysical genius! But though Mr. R. with all his literary advantages, was confessedly at a loss, (should he understand the above cited text in its plain literal meaning, as the Baptists do) to determine which, of the aforesaid two, was the baptizer or the baptized; yet he appears at no loss to determine, what I presume nobody but himself could have determined, viz. that in your citations of the scripture covenants, in the appendix to the Debate, you have for very prudential reasons, as respects your system, entirely overlooked another distinct covenant, recorded Gen. xv. and then proceeds to quote it verbatim, without so much as pretending to shew in any particular, wherein it either favoured his views, or opposed yours; neither of which, indeed, he could possibly do with any shadow of argument; and which, by his reference, and the assertion connected with it, he was bound to do, in order to expose your *prudential reasons* for the de-

signed and wilful omission, and thereby to vindicate himself from the foul imputation which he justly incurs, for his want of *more than prudential caution*, in advancing, unsupported, such a serious charge. But, sir, when I consider the unsupported charges contained in the next two sections of the letter under consideration, I am led to suppose that Mr. R. does not think it necessary to adduce any proof in support of any charge he thinks proper to bring against you, for the purpose of exciting popular odium; and of thereby prejudicing the public against your personal exertions in behalf of a cause, which he appears exceedingly zealous, by all means to suppress. I should not wonder, however, so much at this, where invalidating the exertions of an active advocate for a cause so inimical to the interests of his party, is the main object, if, at the same time he deals a little more in the argumentative style, when he assumes to expound the sacred records; but in this he is lamentably deficient. He tells us in the course of this letter, that circumcision prefigured baptism. Where did he find this? Or who ever heard of one typical or figurative ordinance prefiguring another? Again, he tells us, "that the church of Christ was designed to embrace others besides saints, or persons regenerated, whose duty and privilege it is, to attend on the ordinances of Divine appointment, that they may be regenerated."—That such characters will creep into the church, the scriptures inform us. But where is the church directed to receive such? What description of unsanctified, unregenerate, must these be? How are we to know them? Or does it imply all, who from any motive, may be disposed to join a professing church of Christ? In what light are they to be considered when received? Are they to be considered as brethren, or only as proselytes of the gate among the Jews?—Our author does not say. Perhaps he means all that will submit to be enrolled, and engage to pay stipends. Again, he tells us, "that the privileges of the church from the times of Abraham, were enlarged by the appointment of circumcision, as a mode of initiation for the males." If this be so, of whom did it previously consist? Was it of females only? However this may have been, in the opinion of our author, he proceeds to inform us respecting females, "that the ancient mode of sacrificing was sufficient for them. That infinite wisdom discerned this distinction between males and females." What! that when males were to be admitted into the church the painful rite of circumcision was to be imposed upon them! But, perhaps, they stood in need of this superadded chastisement, to prepare them for admission into the female church, to teach them to behave with a due degree of delicacy, lest a worse punishment should befall them. Be this as it may, it is clear, however, that, in the opinion of our author, something further was necessary for the admission of males, than was required of females, for "sacrificing was sufficient for them." But if the stress of Mr. R's assertion, respecting the enlargement of privilege, lies upon the mode of admission, namely, by circumcision, which equally included males of every age, from eight days old and upwards, this, surely, must be acknowledged to have been a painful privilege; and that the male members, if any such there were, during the previous two thousand years, whether adults or infants, were more highly privileged than those that were admitted without it.—Or perhaps he means by the enlargement of privilege, some superadded spiritual grace conferred upon the circumcised; if so, the poor females were excluded. But, perhaps, as suggested above, it was a peculiar grace which the females did not stand in need of. The above position which has led to these conjectures and inquiries, is one of the many of Mr. R's ipse dixits, equally destitute both of illustration and proof; which, if it have any certain meaning, goes to exclude male members for the first two thousand years. The next that occurs, is not less extraordinary, where he tells us that "the Passover was not only commemorative of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, but of a far greater deliverance, even the deliverance of guilty sinners, by the sacrifice of the Son of God." Strange indeed! Who ever heard of the commemoration of an event upwards of fifteen hundred years before it existed!!! But recollecting Mr. R's rule of interpretation in relation to the word baptizo, I find him quite

consistent with himself; for, if nothing decisive can be legitimately inferred from the words of scripture, and "if a doctrine is to be established by the meaning of the word that conveys it, it must be by the meaning that the inspired penmen attach to it, and not that of heathen writers." That is to say, not by the common and received meaning of the word amongst those who natively spoke and understood the language. This rule being admitted, who knows but the words remember and commemorate, may, in scripture, signify anticipate; nor would these words, thus interpreted, be farther forced or carried from their common and received meaning than the word baptizo is, when made to signify the same as rantizo; or in plain English, than the words immerse or dip would be, if made to signify the same as pour or sprinkle. But upon these premises, the ignorant and unlearned might be tempted to ask Mr. R. (as foolish ignorant people are apt to be impertinently inquisitive) of what use can the sacred writings be to the world, if the writers are so peculiarly singular in their use of words—seeing that mankind will naturally attach the same meaning to the words of the bible, that they are accustomed to do in the common affairs of life; or that they attach to the same words in other books, according to the nature of the subject. They might also feel curious to know by what means Mr. R. Mr. Schluesner, and the rest of their critical and rabbinical brethren, that harmonize with them in their favorite maxim of interpretation, namely, "that the scriptures are not to be understood as they seem to speak;" or in the plain, literal, constructive sense of the words, like other books—I say, they might feel curious to know, how, upon this principle, Mr. R. and his brethren, come to understand them with such apparent ease and certainty, as to be able, readily and positively, to ascertain and declare their meaning upon any and every subject, they feel disposed to assert and maintain upon Divine authority. Such questions, sir, I myself have heard proposed. And to a mind seriously concerned to know whether God or man is obeyed, in what it is to believe and do in the all important concerns of religion, such inquiries, upon the above principle, must and will naturally occur, nor can it be thought strange that they should. In the mean time, however, it is not my province to record the answers that have been given; much less to attempt to furnish answers to those puzzling and important queries. To those who would wish to acquaint themselves with the most elaborate and decisive answers to the above queries, I would recommend the learned and laborious works of the Romish doctors, who have written largely in vindication of clerical infallibility; or to Protestant writers, who have vindicated the competency and authority of synods and councils to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; and to prescribe rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of the church. Or lastly, to the more modern asserters of the utility of creed-making, as a necessary means of scriptural and indispensable obligation for the edification, unity and purity of the church. And to those who have neither means nor leisure to investigate those authorities, I would recommend the perusal of the xxxi. chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, with a careful attention to the scriptures cited at the foot of the page. And if, after having recourse, as far as possible, to the above assertions and vindications of the competency and authority of the clergy, to fix and determine the meaning of the sacred writings, conscientious and inquisitive minds should not feel satisfied, there remains no alternative but rejecting the above principle of interpretation, and receiving the scriptures in their plain, obvious, literal and constructive sense, like any other plain, honest and intelligible book, whose author meant to convey his meaning by the common and established use of the words and phrases which he adopts for that purpose, contrary to Mr. R's. maxim, and Schluesner's definition respecting the word baptizo, predicated thereupon. I here cite it, as a perfect model of arbitrary interpretation. Baptizo, says that great critic, "properly signifies to immerse and dye, to dip into water;" but, adds he, "in this sense it is never used in the New Testament; it is so used, with some frequency, in Greek authors, as it is not unfrequent to dip or immerse something in water in order to wash it." Thus, though

constrained to acknowledge the proper and established use of a Greek word amongst the native Greeks, who unquestionably understood their own language, and without producing a single example of its being used otherwise, he roundly asserts that it is never so used in the New Testament. Can any thing be in more perfect consistency with the alledged maxim, than the above definition?

To your tents, O Israel! What interest can you have in supporting such a usurpation over the intrinsic and essential rights and properties of a revelation from heaven; in supporting a domineering clergy, who thus attempt to obscure and pervert the word, and thus to exclude you from the benefit of its benign and sacred light, that you might affect them as the only competent and legitimate expositors of the oracles of God. You'll not misunderstand me, sir, as if I meant to cast any reflection upon the faithful ministers of Christ, who are sent for the defence of the gospel against all such foul and unworthy imputations; against misconstructions and misrepresentations of every kind, that the truth and certainty of the gospel may continue to shine in the church. But, to proceed: Mr. R. having proved to his own satisfaction, against you, and the late David Jones, as he says, "that God had a church in the world before the days of John the Dipper, (as the epithet is rendered in the approved German versions of Luther and Maldonate) and also before the day of Pentecost, whence, he farther says, you date *your church*, he goes on to amuse us with a lengthy paragraph about the engrafting of dispensations; a discovery, to which, for aught I know, he may justly claim an exclusive right; to me, at least, it is new and singular. I have frequently heard of a succession of dispensations or successive dispensations, one arising out of, and succeeding another, with peculiar and additional enlargements of the Divine munificence, till at last they terminated in the greatest and best gift of heaven. But surely this process is quite repugnant to the idea of engrafting. This misnomer, however, may perhaps originate in Mr. R's. very intimate familiarity with the scripture style, which, at least, in many instances, viz. as often as a doctrine is to be established by the meaning of the word that conveys it, is not to be understood in its plain, obvious, literal sense; but according to the meaning the inspired penmen attach to it. So, I presume, we must frequently understand Mr. R. after the same great and approved example, for he seems to have drunk deeply into this spirit. I should rather suppose, however, if this be not his natural manner, he rather acquired it by a too close and studious attention to the language of the heathen oracles, which was sublimely ambiguous, and, of course, gave great scope to the genius of the heathen clergy, the only legitimate and official interpreters of their enigmatical responses. But, be this as it may, he assures us that the Christian dispensation was engrafted into the Abrahamic; that this is affirmed by Paul, in his epistles, and to this purpose, quotes the 11th chapter of the Romans, in which he says, the Apostle fitly compares the covenant of circumcision, on which the Jewish church was founded, to a good olive tree!!! What a comparison! And for Paul, too, that great master of eloquence and propriety, both of speech and sentiment. But where does he make this comparison? In the 11th of the Romans, says Mr. R. No, sir, I can assure you there is not a word of circumcision in that whole chapter, nor yet in the one that precedes it, nor in that which follows; nor indeed, from the beginning of the 5th to the end of the 14th chapter of that epistle. But according to Mr. R's. rule of interpretation, there may be some word in the chapter, that to him signifies circumcision; and if so, we must suppose there is some secret understanding between the clergy and the inspired writers, which none knows but the initiated. However, we may guess at it, and we can but guess, for we are not in possession of the key. I would suppose then, from the air of easy confidence with which Mr. R. introduces the subject, and makes the assertion that the words "olive tree," in the Apostolic dialect, must signify the covenant of circumcision; yet, I see this will scarcely do, for Mr. R. says, "the Apostle compares the covenant of circumcision to a good olive tree." But to compare a thing with itself is scarcely intelligible. I shall therefore refrain from pretend-

ing to guess, under what form of speech the Apostle conceals the covenant of circumcision in this chapter, and proceed to advert to the place Mr. R. assigns to that covenant. He tells us it was the foundation of the Jewish church. A goodly foundation indeed! It was a covenant in the flesh, Gen. xvii. 13. And the Apostle to the Galatians, calls it flesh, iii. 3—and assures every man that should adhere to that covenant that Christ should profit him nothing, v. 2. Was it not by adhering to this covenant, for an end which it was never intended to answer, that is, for the enjoyment of spiritual and eternal blessings, that the church said to be founded upon it, fell? Moreover, if the Jewish church was founded upon the covenant of circumcision, how does Mr. R. attempt to identify it with the New Testament church, which is built on the rock, Christ, and therefore cannot fail and be broken up, as that church was. Again, it is evident, that if there be any propriety in asserting that the Jewish church was founded upon the covenant of circumcision, with equal propriety may the Christian church be said to be founded upon the new covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace; see Hebrews viii. For if it be alledged, that it was by the performance of the promises of that covenant, that the Jewish church was brought into existence, it may, with equal evidence, be alledged that it was by the performance of the promises of the new covenant, that the Christian church was brought into being. But Mr. R. has proved that the covenant of circumcision was not the covenant of grace. How then can the churches be the same? But to return to the comparison under consideration; Mr. R. asserts that the Apostle in the 11th of the Romans, after comparing the covenant of circumcision to a good olive tree, proceeds to compare Abraham to its root. What! Abraham the root of a covenant! A human person the root of a divine covenant, or of any covenant! Who ever heard such comparisons, such forms of speech? A covenant a tree, and a man the root of a covenant! Why Paul, thou art beside thyself! Want of common sense doth make thee mad! But still more astonishing, not a word of all this in the forecited chapter! No comparison stated either between Abraham or the covenant of circumcision, and any thing whatsoever. I say again, most astonishing, that any man should attempt to palm such forgeries upon a people with an open bible in their hands! But, in the mean time, I believe it is best to proceed no farther in animadverting upon a performance that sets at defiance almost every thing that savours of candour or common sense, lest I tire your patience and exhaust my own; and be insensibly led to assume a tone of sarcastic severity in some measure proportioned to the demerit of the piece; to do justice to which, in this way, would swell up to a volume larger than the substance of the Debate under review. Probably you may take some further notice of it in your own way, if you judge it expedient so to do. In the mean time, if what I have written should, in your judgment, answer any public purpose, for the vindication of truth and detection of sophistry, and thereby tend to alleviate your labour in undertaking a formal reply, it is at your service to make what use you please of it. I shall, therefore, sir, take leave of the subject, with assuring you, that if by any means, you think yourself bound to make a full and particular reply to this pretended review of the Debate, I truly pity you. For my part, I can assure you, I should almost as soon undertake, with Hercules, to clean the Augean stable.

With unfeigned respect and esteem,

I remain, sir, yours in the love of the truth,

PHILALETHES.

1st. P. S. Should you think, sir, that I have not sufficiently adverted to the rule for the resolution of similes, in my supposing that Mr. R. in the above comparison, makes Abraham the root of a covenant, but only of a tree, to which he supposes the covenant to be likened or compared. Should you think, I say, that I have fallen into a mistake of this kind, I would wish you to consider, that when Mr. R. supposes the covenant to be compared to a tree, he must necessarily annex the idea of a root to it, that is to

this covenant tree, and this he tells us was Abraham. Thus the simile supposes Abraham, the covenant and his seed, to be one complex object, viz. a tree laden with fruitful branches; Abraham the root; the covenant the trunk or body growing up out of him, and his offspring the branches growing out of that stalk or trunk. A strange combination of incoherent, heterogeneous materials this, indeed! Surely the mind that could combine them, and conceive of such an object, must certainly possess very singular powers. Of these, however, in the mean time, I leave him in the unenvied possession, and conclude this postscript with observing, that in contemplating the picture his fancy has drawn, you cannot but perceive an ideal or imaginary monster; a tree with a human root, a covenant stalk, and human branches. Admirable vesu! As neither naturalists, nor mythologists have furnished us with a name for this singular production, let it be called, in honor of the discoverer, or rather of the inventor, *Samuel Ralston's tree!*

2d P. S. In addition to the above, permit me, sir, to suggest to your consideration the following queries, to which my mind has been forcibly led, by considering the tendency of the above review.

Query 1. What is the great difference between withholding the scriptures from the laity, as the Romanists do, and rendering them unintelligible by arbitrary interpretation, forced criticisms, and fanciful explanations, as many Protestants do; and, without making the people believe that they are nearly unintelligible, by urging the necessity of what is called a learned clergy, to explain them. If a translation can only be understood through the originals, might it not as well have been withheld? If the labours of a learned clergy be still necessary to render a translation intelligible, upon whose skill and fidelity as translators, and upon whose judgment as expositors, the people must still rely; and to whom they must still look up as their religious guides and dictators, of what use is a translation?

Query 2. Can Mr. R. and his Pede-baptist brethren, hold and inculcate the doctrine of infant sprinkling, in a consistency with the 91, 92 and 94 answers in the Shorter Catechism, and with the 165 and 167 of the Larger? Or is it possible to hold the doctrine contained in those answers concerning the sacraments, and baptism in particular, in a consistency with what is elsewhere taught, both in these, and in the xxviii. chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, with regard to infant sprinkling? To me, I must confess, it appears absolutely impossible, if language has any meaning, or if those standards, so called, exhibit words of truth. I appeal to the answers themselves: "Ans. 92. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed and applied to believers." Mark, only to believers. Are infants capable of believing? If not, according to this, they represent, seal, and apply nothing to them.

"Ans. 91. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his spirit in them that by faith receive them." Here mark again, the blessing of Christ, and the working of his spirit, is wholly restricted to them that by faith receive them. Is it possible to suppose, that infants can so receive? Then surely it would be wrong not to admit them also to the Lord's table. But, the thing being insupportable, they are therefore equally debarred from both.

"Ans. 94. Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water, &c. &c. doth signify and seal, &c. &c. and our engagement to be the Lord's." Connect this with Ans. 167, Larg. Cat. "Our baptism is to be improved by serious and thankful consideration of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it; the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein." Here let the common sense of mankind be attested; let unbiassed reason speak: Is sprinkling a few drops of water on the face, in any sense, a washing of the subject? Can it be said of such, as in 1st Cor. vi. 11, "but ye are washed?" Again, can

an infant make a solemn vow; enter into solemn engagements—Lastly, here: What are the privileges conferred upon, and benefits sealed to infants, according to the doctrine contained in these answers? Are not all the blessings and benefits specified in them exclusively confined to believers? Obviously so, as the words unequivocally declare, in express concurrence with the scriptures cited for proof, at the bottom of the page, under the respective answers. According to the manifest scope and tenor of all those documents taken together, what comes of infant sprinkling? It stands excluded to all intents and purposes. No room is left for it, if the forecited documents contain words of truth.

Query 3. Did ever any man more unblushingly judaize, more grossly carnalize the Christian church, than Rabbi Ralston? Who teaches that the covenant of circumcision was an ecclesiastical covenant; that the Jewish church was founded upon it; that the Christian church is a continuation of the same under some external and accidental differences; that it was also designed to embrace the unsanctified and unregenerate, whose duty and privilege it is to attend on the ordinances of Divine appointment, that they may be regenerated. How evidently does he harmonize in principle with the judaizing teachers in the churches of Galatia, who manifestly considered the Christian church, as he does, to be nothing more than an improvement upon the Abrahamic and Sinaic constitution; admitting with him the advent of the Messiah, and the addition of baptism as the appointed mode of confessing him, without, in the mean time, relaxing any thing from the antecedent obligations of the original constitution, upon which this imaginary improved church of theirs was founded; to be within the constitutional pale of which, was to be within the pale of salvability; that so continuing to observe the appointed means, they might be saved. For, with them, to reject the former covenant obligations, was to reject the very possibility of salvation. For, said they, except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved. In thus teaching, they were certainly more consistent than Rabbi R. For as they considered, with him, that Christianity was nothing more than carrying out Judaism to its ultimate perfection; the constitution, subjects and privileges, being still specifically the same as formerly; they were for holding all together, for carrying all along with them into the profession of Christianity, the priesthood and sacrifices excepted; and these they must necessarily have excepted, in admitting the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. And these they did actually except, as appears, both from the 15th of the Acts, and the Epistle to the Galatians; inasmuch as in the whole course of the controversy, there is not a single word introduced in relation to that subject, and which, had they not admitted as relevant to all intents and purposes, for accomplishing all that ever was intended by sacrifice, must certainly have occupied the most distinguished place in that Debate. It therefore appears that they only plead for the observance of circumcision with the system of religious customs which Moses had delivered them, and which served to distinguish them from all others wherever they resided, and thus to keep up the religious distinction between Jew and Gentile, even as the modern Jews do to this day, though sacrificing, with them, has now ceased for upwards of 1700 years. In all this, I say, they appear to have acted a much more consistent part than the reviewer and his brethren. For holding by the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinai institution which naturally grew out of it, as the very foundation and rule of their ecclesiastic economy, they very consistently plead for circumcision, the instituted sign of adherence to that covenant, the neglect of which was made decisive of a rejection of it, and of all the privileges entailed by it, both civil and religious, from all which the rejector was to be cut off, according to Gen xvii. 14. What a pity, that these ancient judaizers had not possessed such a portion of the logical subtilty of their modern partizans, as would have enabled them to perceive that baptism came in the room of circumcision, and consequently supplied its place to all intents and purposes; or that the Catholic Synod of Jerusalem, which must have certainly known the whole secret, did not condescend to relieve the consciences of their weak breth-

ren, by letting them know that they might now lawfully give up with circumcision, without being considered as rejectors of the ancient covenant of their church and nation, baptism being come in the room thereof. By this easy expedient, the whole difficulty might have been happily removed, and those zealous, pharisaical brethren might have gone on comfortably, understanding that the non-circumcising converts from among the Gentiles, were, by virtue of their baptism, ingrafted with them into the old stock, and stood together with them upon original ground, and therefore, were equally bound with the circumcised Jew to observe all the laws of the original constitution, sacrificing only excepted, for the reasons already assigned. But the Apostles in general, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles in particular, were quite averse from this; they knew no such thing; they never dreamt of such an expedient, nor did they wish it. Their great object was, not to unite Christ and Moses, baptized believers with circumcised Abraham; but with Abraham the believing prototype; and that righteousness which he had, being yet uncircumcised, and which of course, was absolutely independent of circumcision and the law. No, their great study and labour with respect to those that had been brought up under the law, was to divorce them from the law; that, with respect to their former relation and relative obligations, they might be induced to consider it as dead, and to stand together with Abraham in that righteousness, in which he was accepted, 25 years before circumcision, and 430 before the giving of the law. That being thus instructed, they might look to Christ alone, and cheerfully confide in him, and so become heirs, with him, of an infinitely better inheritance than that which was conveyed through circumcision and the law, even of all the blessings of the new covenant, which are *all spiritual and eternal*—all sure mercies; the enjoyment of which cannot be forfeited by the covenantees; inasmuch as the covenant grant of these mercies is, to them, absolutely unconditional; the actual exhibition and enjoyment of them, being, like the original promise whence they flow, absolutely independent of circumcision and the law. Not so Mr. R's poor drudges, who are set to work for regeneration and conversion, in the use of external means, that in so doing they may become regenerate and converted. A work this, infinitely more arduous than what was required by circumcision and the law, which only required such a righteousness as might qualify men for the limited enjoyment of a happy and prosperous life in this world, under the divine government, and which, we see, was the only reward promised to the obedience required. Now surely, if in working out such a righteousness, under the very best means that infinite wisdom could devise, that carnal nation so remarkably failed, what must have been the case, if with Mr. R's carnal church members, they had been called to work out such an internal change, as would have made them meet for the kingdom of heaven; which kingdom, with the change that qualifies for it, is so entirely repugnant to the carnal mind, that it is at absolute enmity against it. Oh, cruel Doctor, what heavy burdens dost thou impose upon thy poor carnal church members! To your tents, O Israel! What have we to do with those rabbinical doctors, that are always dabbling in circumcision and the law; always going back to a dead, nay, to a killing letter, to infer Christian privilege, and teach Christian duty. We who believe are not without law to God, but under law to Christ. Not, indeed, the law of works, but the law of faith. If what I have written be not pleasing, I am sure I have wearied you. Farewell.

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